

Iran, Germany said to reach deal

BEIRUT (AP) — A senior Muslim fundamentalist source said Sunday that Iran and Germany have reached a "gentlemen's agreement," under which the German hostages in Lebanon would be freed as part of a wider prisoner exchange. The source, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said Iran was determined to remove all obstacles blocking the release of the Germans and up to eight other Western hostages in Lebanon. "Iran has taken upon itself to resolve all issues blocking the release, including the issue of the Hamas," he said. The fate of two German hostages has been linked to two Lebanese brothers, Mohammad and Abbas Hamadi, imprisoned in Germany for hijacking and murder. "The hostages, Heinrich Struwig and Thomas Kompasser, are believed held by followers of the Hamadi's elder brother, Abdul Hadi, a senior security official of the pro-Iranian Hizbullah (Party of God). "The Iranians have struck a gentlemen's agreement with the German government that they would talk the Hamadi family into freeing the two hostages as part of the overall deal," the source said. "In return, the Germans have indicated they would issue a pardon to Mohammad Ali and Abbas several months after the Germans are released," he added.



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Berserk gunman kills 3 in Sidon

SIDON (AP) — A gunman went berserk in this southern port city Sunday, hurling grenades and dynamite sticks at random. Police said three people were killed and 8 wounded before the gunman was killed by Lebanese troops. A police spokesman said the assailant, a member of a disarmed militia that controlled Sidon during Lebanon's civil war, climbed onto a rooftop in the city's Kanaya suburb in the evening to stage his attack. "He had a bagful of grenades and dynamite sticks which he threw at pedestrians below him," said the spokesman. He said the dead included two members of the Nasserite militia and a woman passer-by. Army troops opened up with machine guns from a nearby checkpoint and killed the gunman, who for years had gone by the nom de guerre of Castro, according to the spokesman. He said it could not be determined what made the gunman run amok.

Likud delegation visits Egypt

TEL AVIV (AP) — A delegation of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's ruling Likud bloc left for Cairo Sunday where they planned to meet with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, a party statement said. The delegation of the Likud Young Guard, headed by party spokesman Gil Sansonov, will propose a "joint peace forum" to promote normal relations between the two countries, the daily Jerusalem Post said. Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Mohammad Bassionny saw the delegation off and told them he hoped their visit would signal the setting of "another stepping stone in the peace process." The Likud statement said. The delegation was to meet with Mr. Musa on their arrival and would also meet with Youssef Wali, deputy premier and minister of agriculture, and with young leaders of President Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party before their Friday departure, a party statement said. The eight-man delegation does not include parliament members and is the first official visit to Egypt of a delegation from the right-wing Likud party.

Afghan rebels free ICRC delegate

GENEVA (AP) — Afghan rebels Sunday released Alexandre Ghelew, a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who had been kidnapped on a mission Aug. 4, the ICRC said. Negotiations for his release had been under way with several opposition groups since Mr. Ghelew's abduction north of Kabul, according to officials of the All-Swiss humanitarian organization. The group that held him was never identified and the kidnappers' motives or claims were not disclosed by the ICRC which said that Mr. Ghelew was in good health.

Albanian minister visits Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — Albania's Foreign Minister Muhamet Kapllani arrived in Israel Sunday and is expected to sign an agreement establishing diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. Albania, which is about 70 per cent Muslim, is suffering from severe economic crisis and is hoping that the Jewish state can provide it with economic, health and agricultural aid, Israeli officials said. Mr. Kapllani is the first Albanian diplomat to visit Israel. During his three-day stay, he is scheduled to meet with Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister David Levy. "I have come on a mission of friendship. We shall be signing a memorandum to establish diplomatic relations and this should be seen as an historic event," Mr. Kapllani said upon arrival. In April, most of Albania's Jewish community was brought to Israel in a secretive operation. Fewer than 50 of about 350 families remain today in the Balkan state. Albania, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union are the last remaining east European countries who do not have full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Egypt and Syria said to accept Arab talks ahead of peace conference

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Syria and Egypt have accepted to attend a meeting of the five "confrontation Arab parties" before the proposed Middle East peace conference in October, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said Sunday.

PLO Executive Committee member Suleiman Najjib said that Syria told a visiting Palestinian delegation last month it was ready to take part in a meeting that would include the PLO, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon to coordinate a united position before the peace conference starts.

"During our last visit to Syria a month ago, they told us that they would attend such a meeting," Mr. Najjib told the Jordan Times. "Egypt had expressed its readiness for the meeting before that," he added.

The PLO had called for the meeting of the four Arab countries neighbouring Israel and the PLO to coordinate strategy vis-a-vis the peace conference called for by the U.S. and the Soviet Union to be held in October.

Jordan accepted the idea from the beginning and Prime Minister Taher Masri earlier this month called for speedy moves to convene the meeting as soon as possible.

"Syria previously had some re-

King visits Syria today

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein is scheduled to pay a visit to Damascus today for talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on the ongoing efforts for convening a Middle East peace conference, informed sources said.

the meeting. "When the time comes, we'll see," said Mr. Najjib, who leads the Palestinian Communist Party, which was given a seat in the PLO Executive Committee in 1987.

Earlier Sunday, the PLO official met with Prime Minister Masri and Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensour during which he delivered a message from the PLO leadership to the Jordanian government. Mr. Najjib would not elaborate on the details of the message.

However, he said the purpose of his visit was also to pave the way for a visit by a high-ranking PLO delegation that would coordinate the organisation's position on the peace conference with Jordan.

Jordan has offered a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to take part in the conference, and the scheduled visit by the PLO delegation, which may include Chairman Yasser Arafat, is expected to focus on the form of the delegation and agreement on the outcome of the conference.

Mr. Najjib said the focus of his talks Sunday was on "the content of the peace process and not the form of the delegation because we are flexible as long as the content of the gathering is Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination."

(Continued on page 5)

Algeria to free 329 detainees

ALGIERS (AP) — The government Sunday said to release 329 detainees held since violent protests interrupted election campaigning and prompted the state of emergency declared in June.

Those to be released had been arrested during protests by fundamentalist Muslims but did not include jailed leaders of the fundamentalist movement.

No releases had been confirmed by early evening, though they had been announced Saturday.

The government said that around 800 others who remain in custody will be tried in connection with the unrest that had pressed for election reform.

"These releases ... do not free the people involved from being interned again if judiciary services find that they have committed crimes or wrongdoings," Prime Minister Sid Ahmad Ghazali said in a communique Saturday.

Some 3,000 people were arrested in two weeks of unrest in late May and early June between fundamentalist supporters and security forces that left 55 people dead and more than 300 wounded.

The fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the main opposition group, insists that its leaders be freed and the state of emergency lifted before joining talks on preparing legislative elections.

Those talks between the government and opposition parties are to resume Aug. 22. A previous round of talks made little progress on deciding a date for legislative elections and any changes in balloting rules.

The decision to release the detainees was because of "positive results registered in matters of security," Mr. Ghazali said in the communique, apparently referring to a lack of recent unrest. He also said the action was taken because of the government's will for "appeasement."

The government declared the state of emergency June 5 and postponed legislative elections scheduled for June 27. The state of emergency set up military tribunals and gave security forces special powers of search and detention.

The government agreed, however, to hold legislative elections in November.

CBJ revokes export guarantee requirement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Sunday announced that it was cancelling a 1988 standing order which requires exporters to furnish guarantees that proceeds of Jordanian exports in foreign currency will be repatriated home.

The guarantee requirement order was issued by the CBJ in July 1988 to ensure the return to the country of badly needed foreign exchange.

According to an official statement quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the revocation of the order comes in line with the CBJ's new policy of rescinding all restrictive controls over foreign currency with a view to stimulating economic activities in the Kingdom, especially those pertaining to the sectors of industry and export.

The new step, according to the official, comes in the light of the positive developments in the local money markets over the past two years, and reflects full confidence in the country's monetary policies as spearheaded by the CBJ.

The CBJ official said that the step was taken "in harmony with the CBJ's policy, which aims to end control and restrictions over foreign currency in Jordan, to encourage national exports which bring in foreign exchange, to remove hurdles that used to obstruct the free outflow of national exports and to save time, effort and expenses incurred by the exporters in the implementation of the 1988 orders."

He said that the new move could help industrialists and exporters to play a "more active role in Jordan's economic development at this stage with most beneficial results to the country's balance of payments in general and the balance of trade in particular."

3 Palestinians killed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Three Palestinians were found dead or killed Sunday in an escalating wave of violence in the occupied territories amid efforts to convene Arab-Israeli peace talks.

A Palestinian splinter group called Sunday for the ouster of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and for choosing a new leadership with wider representation for Arabs from the occupied territories.

The call for rebellion was believed the first against Mr. Arafat from inside his own Fatah movement, although he has come under sharp criticism from other Palestinian groups in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The five-page leaflet, distributed in Nablus and Ramallah by "The 14th of January Corrective Movement," called "on all Palestinian democratic forces to form a front capable of replacing aging leadership with new, young, efficient and honest leadership."

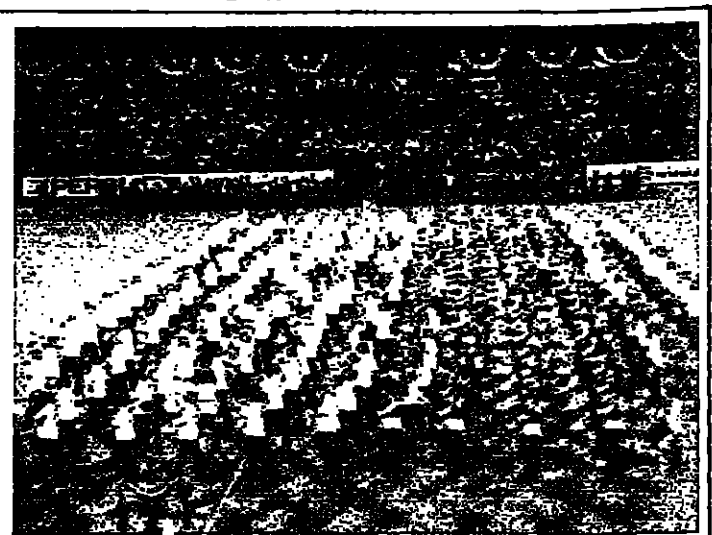
The group is named for the date when Mr. Arafat's former aide, Salah Khalaf, was assassinated in Tunis.

The leaflet accused Mr. Arafat of bringing "devastation and destruction" to the Palestinian people by supporting Iraq during the Gulf war.

"Arafat led the Palestinian ship to the shores of splits, wreckage,



ARMED FORCES FESTIVAL: His Majesty King Hussein Sunday attends a military festival held by the Armed Forces to mark the 39th anniversary of the King's accession to the Throne. The festival, which was held at Al Hussein Youth City Stadium, included military and sport performances. The festival was attended by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah and Prince Ali, Prime



Minister Taher Masri, the Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, the Royal Court chief, the King's political advisor, ministers, former prime ministers, the Armed Forces chief of staff, senators and deputies and senior army officers (Photos by Youssef Al'Allan)

Jordan pursues efforts to help stranded Gazans

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian government has stepped up efforts to convince Egypt to lift entry restrictions imposed on Gazans holding Egyptian documents stranded in Kuwait, informed sources said Sunday.

"Jordan is trying to get the Egyptian government to allow the Gazans to come to Egypt regardless of whether or not they have an entry permit to the (Israeli-occupied) Gaza Strip," said one source.

The source, who did not reveal the channels through which Amman was pushing its efforts, said the Kingdom's endeavours were complementary to contacts that are under way between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Egyptian government.

Usually reliable sources said last month that Egyptian officials, in talks with senior PLO representatives, had promised to ease entry restrictions imposed on Gazans. But no decision has yet been reached, the same sources said Sunday.

Cairo is following a policy of granting 72-hour transit visas to Gazans with "Israeli permits" to enter the Gaza Strip, but putting others through a screening process which could take up to four weeks, and in many cases applications are turned down by the Egyptian Interior Ministry.

Sources familiar with the screening process said that those who can be considered to support themselves are given permission to enter Egypt with possibilities of stay in the country while others are turned down.

An Egyptian source said it was not true that the government had adopted a policy of "blanket refusal" to Gazans holding Egyptian documents. "Gazans who possess (Israeli-issued) entry permits to Gaza are automatically granted 72-hour transit visas to enter Egypt," said the source.

Others are referred to Cairo for a process which does not take more than four weeks to be completed," added the source.

The source did not provide any figure for the rate of rejection of applications.

Cairo's argument says that Egypt cannot allow Gazans into its territory without guarantees that they are assured of Israeli permission to enter the Gaza Strip.

Expatriate sources said around 23,000 Gazans holding Egyptian travel documents remained in Kuwait with nowhere to go in the face of the Egyptian policy. No accurate estimate is available on the number of Gazans with Egyptian documents who passed through Jordan since the Iraqi

(Continued on page 5)

Jordan has commuted five death sentences — Amnesty

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan has commuted death sentences passed on five prisoners convicted under martial law and has promised to review cases of other prisoners, senior officials of Amnesty International said Sunday.

Hanny Megally, head of the Middle East section of the London-based human rights organisation, and Claudio Cordone, an Amnesty researcher, said they were referred to the government's decision during a meeting with Prime Minister Taher Masri on their current visit to Jordan.

Mr. Megally and Mr. Cordone are in Jordan to assess the Kingdom's record and conduct in the field of human rights.

Jordan, which had come under heavy criticism in previous Amnesty International reports, does no longer find itself the target of such criticism from the organisation following the liberalisation and democratisation process launched since 1989.

Reporting the commutation of death sentences as conveyed to them by Prime Minister Masri, Mr. Megally said that "it is expected that some, even many, prisoners will be released."

Amnesty hopes that the cases of all those tried by mar-

tial law courts will be solved without delay, he said, describing trial conducted under martial law as "unfair."

The identity of those reprieved from the gallows or the nature of the crimes they were convicted of was not immediately known and no official was available for comment.

Mr. Megally's and Mr. Cordone's visit comes as a follow-up on last year's visit Amnesty International Secretary-General Ian Martin.

Mr. Martin had met with officials of the Jordanian government to discuss Amnesty's concern about human rights in the country, Jordan's memorandum and proposals for government reform and recommendations. "Since then," Mr. Megally told the Jordan Times, "we have noted that regulations governing martial law have been repealed and various laws are in the stages of being drafted, in particular the defence law, state security court law, press laws and the political parties law."

Amnesty International had objected to the new defence law as being too harsh. "Amnesty had recommended that safeguards be introduced into the defence law, particularly with regard to administrative detention," Mr. Megally recalled. Amnesty also recommended strict time limits on the duration of detention and

for prompt judicial review of it.

Since the arrival of the AI team, "we have been informed that the new state security court law will include the right of appeal for the court of cassation, which is in line with our recommendation," Mr. Megally said.

Mr. Megally and Mr. Cordone also met with Minister of Interior Jawdat Shoul.

Mr. Shoul, in comments carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the delegation voiced satisfaction with the measures taken by the government concerning human rights and the government's keenness to provide a suitable atmosphere to bring the democratic experiment to a successful end. The minister said he reviewed with the delegation the procedures adopted by the government to protect public freedoms.

One area that Amnesty remains concerned over is that the present safeguards "need to be considerably strengthened," said Mr. Megally, referring to detention and interrogation of suspects. "In particular," he said, "the organisation has been calling for strict access (within hours or days of arrest) to lawyers, families and medical examinations." Amnesty also stresses the importance of access of

(Continued on page 5)

Iran tightens pressure on Israel to break impasse over hostages

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran Sunday stepped up pressure on Israel to free Muslim prisoners and end the impasse in complex negotiations to free Western hostages in Lebanon.

Israeli hostage negotiators said Sunday they do not expect an immediate breakthrough on the hostage issue despite a frenzy of diplomatic activity last week after an American and British hostage were freed.

"Nothing can happen overnight. This is a very complex problem," said Uri Lubrani, the defence ministry's adviser on Lebanon, who is heading Israel's efforts to secure a prisoner swap.

Weekend reports quoted U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar as saying he believed a solution could be negotiated within two weeks.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Lubrani said Israelis involved in negotiating a prisoner swap "have become very wary of predicting time frames and results and so forth. We have become slightly cynical about it."

He said "the only important development so far" was that Mr. Perez de Cuellar was now the mediator.

"I don't think that we could have hoped for a higher level of activity," said Mr. Lubrani, who twice visited Geneva last week for talks with Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

"No country and no organisation will want to lead him down

the garden path... disappoint him... frustrate his efforts," he said.

Mr. Lubrani insisted Iran had the "overriding influence" to secure the release of Western hostages in Lebanon, and to provide "a clear, irrefutable, unequivocal indication" of the fate of Israel's missing men.

But Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, continuing Tehran's high-profile manoeuvring of the hostages, urged visiting representatives of the European Parliament to put pressure on Israel.

"There is now a positive trend underway for the freedom of the hostages and Israel should be brought under pressure to release the Lebanese and Palestinians it holds as hostages," he said in remarks carried by Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

"It seems that if this is done the positive process will continue," Mr. Velayati added.

The headline and sole surviving son of Iran's late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in remarks carried by Tehran Radio, suggested Israel also should release thousands of Palestinians arrested in Israel's crackdown on the uprising in the occupied territories.

"If Westerners are really defenders of human rights, they must put pressure on the Zionist regime so that thousands of Muslim hostages are released from that country's prisons," said Mr.

(Continued on page 5)

Khomeini.

His reference to thousands instead of hundreds of prisoners clearly meant he included Palestinians arrested on the occupied West Bank.

Israel has repeatedly said its 8,000 Palestinian prisoners will not be part of any package deal on hostages and its missing servicemen. Hostage talks have focused on exchanging nearly 400 mostly Lebanese detainees under Israeli control for seven missing Israeli servicemen, or their remains, and the Western hostages.

Mr. Khomeini is an influential voice in Iran. But his radical views often have been at odds with the government of President Hashemi Rafsanjani, who seeks to end the hostage crisis to end Iran's international isolation.

Mr. Velayati reiterated Iran's desire to resolve the hostage issue. He said the efforts of Mr. Perez de Cuellar to resolve the crisis were positive and expressed hope they would succeed.

The frenzied, high-profile negotiations of the past week appear to have given way to behind-the-scenes manoeuvres aimed at cracking the difficult problems impeding any hostage release.

Iran is trying to generate Western pressure on Israel to break the impasse. But Israel has steadfastly insisted on getting information on its missing servicemen

(Continued on page 5)

Experts see potential for progress towards peace, but only over time

By Jocelyn Noveck
The Associated Press

IF THE UNITED STATES can find a way to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute over Palestinian representation, the long-sought Middle East peace conference can finally begin.

Then comes the rough part. In the early stages of the conference, prospects for real progress appear dim. Israel has given no sign it is willing to cede Arab land — the basic premise of the U.S. peace plan. Neither have the Arabs shown willingness to back down from their demand for their land.

Among a dozen analysts and former officials interviewed in the United States and the Middle East, however, there was a feeling that in the long run — perhaps years of hard bargaining — compromise was possible.

Progress is most likely between Israel and the Palestinians, some say, because the Palestinians are weaker politically than before the Gulf war and might be anxious to make a deal with Israel.

They note that, with the end of the cold war, Syria lost its traditional patron in the region — the Soviet Union — and President Hafez Al Assad could be more amenable to U.S. diplomacy.

All stress that a forceful U.S. role is crucial to progress. The United States, they say, must be involved in all phases of the talks, ready to flex its political and economic muscle and prod the sides into compromise.

Most analysts agree that, even if the initial talks yield no results, the mere fact of the sides coming together will be beneficial. Formidable psychological barriers will be broken, and the talks themselves could generate momentum.

"Negotiations don't just photograph positions, they change them," said Abba Eban, the Israeli statesman. "Once they begin, people are hesitant to break them off."

Palestinian professor Emile

Saliyah said: "At least the 'Berlin Wall' between the sides will have been broken."

Others fear positions could harden if the talks fail, giving new impetus to the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories and bringing the region closer to war.

Here are the views of five of those questioned:

— William Quandt, Middle East analyst at the Brookings Institution in Washington, predicts talks will bog down quickly over entrenched positions. Thus, the United States will have to remain actively involved to keep things moving, he said.

Mr. Quandt sees a better chance for movement on the Palestinian issue because the Palestinians want "to reverse a negative trend."

Possible interim solutions, he said, could include an Israeli offer on a demilitarized Gaza Strip, or an offer of elections in Palestinian municipalities in exchange for assurances of calm.

In the long term — possibly when the right-wing government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is no longer in power — he envisions a "confederal arrangement" involving Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan.

— Dr. Saliyah, a former professor at Birzeit University in the occupied West Bank, feels peace is possible in the long term under a more moderate Israeli government.

The first movement might be "confidence-building measures," Dr. Saliyah said. These would include Israel giving Palestinians more control over their communities.

He doubts the current Israeli government would trade land for peace. But later, he can foresee a transitional arrangement under which Israel would gradually start transferring authority to a Jordanian-Palestinian entity.

As for Syria, which wants the Golan Heights back, Dr. Saliyah sees a deal involving a demilitarized Golan. The same deal, he

said, could include a demilitarized southern Lebanon.

— Mr. Eban, a former Israeli foreign minister, feels progress is more likely on the Palestinian issue because "things are going against them."

He envisioned an interim settlement along the lines of the 1978 Camp David accords, meaning an agreement on autonomy with the final status of the occupied territories to be determined later.

He said one scenario is that, if Mr. Shamir feels he is being pressured too much, he would break off the talks and call early elections, delaying any agreement.

If the talks failed, there would be despair, a growth of radicalism on both sides and more suppression of Palestinians in the occupied territories, Mr. Eban said.

Rami Khouri, a political analyst in Amman, does not expect progress from the face-to-face meetings between the sides, but "eventually we will have to move together."

Mr. Khouri said partial concessions by both sides could lead to a comprehensive settlement, "but a partial solution would not work."

Sitting down to talk is essential, he said, but "if there is no agreement, this will definitely lead to war."

— Gregory Gause, an American professor of Middle East studies at Columbia University, said the prospects for success are dim. He said Israel does not appear willing to change its policy, but is mainly going along with the conference to please Washington and be assured of continued aid.

"The United States seems to think that, once people sit down, they'll come to some sort of an agreement," he said. "That's nonsensical."

Mr. Gause predicted the talks would eventually "peter out." Their failure might not lead to war, he said, but "could leave things worse than they were before."

Doha ready to drop territorial case if King Fahd solves it

DOHA (AP) — Qatar said Saturday it would withdraw a territorial dispute case lodged with the International Court against Bahrain if Saudi Arabia's King Fahd leads the two neighbors to an acceptable settlement.

An unidentified Qatari official quoted by the state-run Qatari News Agency said: "If an acceptable brotherly solution is reached through the wise efforts of ... King Fahd, then the case will be immediately withdrawn from the international court."

It said that was in line with the agreement reached on the fringes of the annual summit conference of the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in December 1990. Saudi Arabia is the leading party in the six-country alliance that also includes Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.

The statement said that the mediation and the legal arbitration were "parallel means of attaining justice and bolstering peace and security in the Gulf region."

It urged restraint in public comment about the dispute, saying that the alternative would not be in the interest of the "atmosphere of quiet legal deliberations" at the Hague, nor of the goodwill efforts of the Saudi kingdom.

The Qatari statement was the first since it lodged its case in July with the World Court, formally known as the International Court of Justice, an affiliate of the United Nations.

Qatar rejects a British decision in 1939 which granted sovereignty to Bahrain over a string of flyspeck islands known as Hawar, and the Fasht Al Dibal and Jaradah shoals.

The disputed area between the peninsula state and the central Gulf island is potentially oil-rich. Bahrain, in a terse statement in July, said it "rejects absolutely the claims made by the State of Qatar" to the World Court.

In the meantime, Arab diplomatic sources reported that a Qatari warship on Aug. 3 entered Bahrain's eastern waters "without pursuing the normal official procedure," considering it a violation of Bahraini territorial rights.

They said Bahrain coast guard units accosted the Qatari warship and escorted it until it left the waters east of the Dibal shoals.

The statement distributed by the Qatari News Agency made no reference to this incident. But it said Bahraini naval units "several times" penetrated the disputed waters in a violation of a 1986 agreement that Qatar and Bahrain would desist from a military presence in those areas.

The border dispute had flared in 1986 when Qatari forces briefly occupied the Fasht Al Dibal reef where the Dutch Ballast Nedam firm was undertaking reclamation work. King Fahd immediately stepped in to mediate a settlement.

Aside from the terse July statement, Bahrain officials have declined public comment on the developments, but Gulf officials said that the Bahrain government had officially protested the Aug. 3 incident.

Both countries gained independence from Britain in 1971, and each has a fledgling naval force on barely a dozen units that include Exocet-equipped missile gunboats.

Indian politician-cum-journalist promises 'true portrayal' of Arabs

By Serene Hakala

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two documentaries about the Arab World in the aftermath of the Gulf war, made by an Indian crew for Indian Television, will be a surprising diversion from the stereo-typed Western presentation of the Middle East and its problems, the Indian director and producer of the documentaries promises.

Bhim Singh, a member of the national assembly of Kashmir who is well known in India for his activities in support of Arab causes and the Palestinians, is a self-styled politician-cum-journalist and television producer.

Mr. Singh, who successfully produced a documentary on the Gulf crisis entitled "Seeds of War" — with footage of Iraq before and during the war — promises that his next two productions "will reflect the true situation in the Arab World today, after the Gulf war."

"Journalism is my mission," Mr. Singh told the Jordan Times in an interview a few hours before his departure from Jordan after concluding filming for the documentaries. "The Arab World is not properly understood among the masses in my country" and there is a need for a true portrayal of the Arabs, added Mr. Singh, head of the Panthers Party which has extended its support for the government of P.V. Narsimha Rao in New Delhi.

"I felt that they (Indians) needed to know things about the Arabs. They needed to know about the occupied territories, the Al Aqsa Mosque, the Holy Sepulchre Church, Lebanon, and Iraq," he said.

According to Mr. Singh it was the wide acclaim that "Seeds of War" drew in India that prompted the state-owned television (Doordarshan) to commission him to make two more documentaries on the aftermath of the Gulf war.

"Seeds of War reflected the seeds of conflict in the Middle East and showed that as long as the Palestinian problem remains unresolved the region will always be in turmoil," according to Mr. Singh, whose opinion on international developments and American policies are often described by many as revolutionary.

Mr. Singh was in Amman last week on the last leg of his travel through the Arab World, including Iraq, the occupied territories, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Tunisia, where he and his three-member team interviewed Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Singh was interviewed by Rami Khouri on Jordan Television's "Encounter" programme screened Saturday night. In his comments during the interview, Mr. Singh focused on what he said was the Third World perspective of the Gulf crisis and the international scene and lashed out at American policies.

While it was mostly smooth sailing for Mr. Singh in the Arab countries — although he was disappointed a little in Lebanon — he faced a tough process while trying to get into the occupied territories.

"We were interrogated for five hours by the Israelis who finally agreed to let us into occupied Palestine only on the condition that we leave our cameras at the bridge" across the River Jordan, Mr. Singh said.

Among the Palestinian leaders whom Mr. Singh met with in the occupied territories was Arab East Jerusalemite Faisal Husseini. "Mr. Husseini reaffirmed that the Palestinians regard the PLO as their sole legitimate representative and will not compromise on the issue of Palestinian representation (in peace talks)," Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Husseini "also said that they (Palestinians) are willing to talk to anybody, but that there would be no peace without PLO participation in the (proposed) peace conference," Mr. Singh said.

In Amman, Mr. Singh, director of the private Voice of the Millions television company in New Delhi, interviewed His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arafat.

"We also talked to many other officials who explained to us the problems faced by the Kingdom with the return of the expatriates and the cut in the annual aid coming from the Gulf," he said.

On his second visit to Iraq since the Gulf crisis erupted in August 1990, Mr. Singh travelled extensively through the country, examining the situation in the north and south, and filming what he referred to as "the human suffering of the Iraqis" following the war and the impact of the continuing international sanctions against Iraq.

In Lebanon, the team interviewed President Elias Hrawi and several ministers, but "when we tried to go to the south — to the areas occupied by Israel — we were denied entry," Mr. Singh said.

"I saw it with my own eyes only white journalists were allowed into (Israel's self-styled security zone)," he added.

In Syria the team met with senior officials and politicians of the Democratic Socialist Party. In Egypt, they interviewed the ministers of foreign affairs and information and members of the Egyptian Socialist Party.

Recalling his interview with Mr. Arafat in Tunis, Mr. Singh said that the PLO chairman "seemed confident about liberating Palestine from Zionist occupation."

"He also praised His Majesty King Hussein's efforts to solve the Middle East problem and described him as a great statesman," Mr. Singh added.

Mr. Singh said he expected to complete in two weeks the process of putting together the two documentaries from the 30 hours footage that his team has filmed. "We are dealing with a very sensitive issue that needs to be tackled carefully," Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Singh expressed appreciation of the Jordanian government's support for and help in making the documentaries. He also said that he was thinking of making two more documentaries, "one about Lebanon and the rebirth of a nation, and the second about Jordan and the democratisation process here..."

tories, the Al Aqsa Mosque, the Holy Sepulchre Church, Lebanon, and Iraq," he said.

According to Mr. Singh it was the wide acclaim that "Seeds of War" drew in India that prompted the state-owned television (Doordarshan) to commission him to make two more documentaries on the aftermath of the Gulf war. "Seeds of War reflected the seeds of conflict in the Middle East and showed that as long as the Palestinian problem remains unresolved the region will always be in turmoil," according to Mr. Singh, whose opinion on international developments and American policies are often described by many as revolutionary.

Mr. Singh was in Amman last week on the last leg of his travel through the Arab World, including Iraq, the occupied territories, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Tunisia, where he and his three-member team interviewed Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Singh was interviewed by Rami Khouri on Jordan Television's "Encounter" programme screened Saturday night. In his comments during the interview, Mr. Singh focused on what he said was the Third World perspective of the Gulf crisis and the international scene and lashed out at American policies.

While it was mostly smooth sailing for Mr. Singh in the Arab countries — although he was disappointed a little in Lebanon — he faced a tough process while trying to get into the occupied territories.

"We were interrogated for five hours by the Israelis who finally agreed to let us into occupied Palestine only on the condition that we leave our cameras at the bridge" across the River Jordan, Mr. Singh said.

Among the Palestinian leaders whom Mr. Singh met with in the occupied territories was Arab East Jerusalemite Faisal Husseini. "Mr. Husseini reaffirmed that the Palestinians regard the PLO as their sole legitimate representative and will not compromise on the issue of Palestinian representation (in peace talks)," Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Husseini "also said that they (Palestinians) are willing to talk to anybody, but that there would be no peace without PLO participation in the (proposed) peace conference," Mr. Singh said.

In Amman, Mr. Singh, director of the private Voice of the Millions television company in New Delhi, interviewed His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arafat.

"We also talked to many other officials who explained to us the problems faced by the Kingdom with the return of the expatriates and the cut in the annual aid coming from the Gulf," he said.

On his second visit to Iraq since the Gulf crisis erupted in August 1990, Mr. Singh travelled extensively through the country, examining the situation in the north and south, and filming what he referred to as "the human suffering of the Iraqis" following the war and the impact of the continuing international sanctions against Iraq.

In Lebanon, the team interviewed President Elias Hrawi and several ministers, but "when we tried to go to the south — to the areas occupied by Israel — we were denied entry," Mr. Singh said.

"I saw it with my own eyes only white journalists were allowed into (Israel's self-styled security zone)," he added.

In Syria the team met with senior officials and politicians of the Democratic Socialist Party. In Egypt, they interviewed the ministers of foreign affairs and information and members of the Egyptian Socialist Party.

Recalling his interview with Mr. Arafat in Tunis, Mr. Singh said that the PLO chairman "seemed confident about liberating Palestine from Zionist occupation."

"He also praised His Majesty King Hussein's efforts to solve the Middle East problem and described him as a great statesman," Mr. Singh added.

Mr. Singh said he expected to complete in two weeks the process of putting together the two documentaries from the 30 hours footage that his team has filmed. "We are dealing with a very sensitive issue that needs to be tackled carefully," Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Singh expressed appreciation of the Jordanian government's support for and help in making the documentaries. He also said that he was thinking of making two more documentaries, "one about Lebanon and the rebirth of a nation, and the second about Jordan and the democratisation process here..."

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secretary-general's special Cyprus envoy, and U.N. Political Affairs Director GUSTAV FEISEL.

The two men are on a fact-finding trip that will also take them to Turkey and Cyprus next week.

"It is necessary for them to return as the bearers of specific, constructive and logical answers on the territorial and refugees issues," Mr. Samaras said, "or there won't be any progress on Cyprus."

He made the statement after a one-and-a-half hour meeting with Oscar Camillion, the U.N.

ATHENS (AP) — Foreign Minister Andonis Samaras said Saturday after meeting with two senior United Nations officials that Turkey was torpedoing efforts to hold a meeting on the Cyprus problem in September.

"I informed them about the recent barrage of statements by Turkish and Turkish Cypriot officials that are torpedoing efforts to come to an understanding," Mr. Samaras told reporters.

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Sheikh Obeid's wife appeals for his release

NICOSIA (AP) — The wife of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid has appealed to Iran and all international bodies to secure the release of her husband, the most important Shiite prisoner held by Israel, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Sunday.

Sheikh Obeid, 33, a prominent Shiite cleric who was a top official of Hizbollah, in southern Lebanon, was kidnapped by airborne Israeli agents from his home in 1989 to be used as a bargaining chip for Israeli prisoners.

Hizbollah is believed to be the umbrella group for the groups holding most of the 11 remaining Western hostages. Sheikh Obeid's release from a prison in northern Israel has been demanded by the Western hostage holders.

IRNA, in a report monitored in Nicosia, said Sheikh Obeid's wife in a letter to the agency's office in Sidon, Lebanon, appealed to Iran and all international bodies to make efforts to secure the release of her husband and other Lebanese prisoners held by Israel.

Relatives of some of the other Arab prisoners staged a sit-in Friday in Beirut and sent an appeal to the United Nations



Israel is holding Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners who are expected to feature in a prisoner exchange deal involving Western hostages held in Lebanon. Some of the prisoners are held at an Israeli prison camp at Atlit, south of Haifa, seen here.

saying their loved ones deserve freedom just as much as the missing Westerners in Lebanon.

Uri Lubrani, the adviser on Lebanon to Israel's defence ministry, Saturday offered to allow the Red Cross to visit Sheikh Obeid but only on condition of reciprocal visits to Israelis held in Lebanon.

Israel is pressing for information on seven of its servicemen

missing in Lebanon. Mr. Lubrani told Israel Radio Saturday that until Israel got authoritative information on its missing servicemen there would be no movement on the hostage talks.

"We appreciate the fact that his family is of course anxious. Our families are anxious too and I think it is high time that all this misery and agony and anguish should be stopped," he said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Les Grandes Battailles de l'histoire
19:30 News in French
19:35 Weekly Sports Magazine
19:35 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Surgical Spirit
21:10 Murder she wrote
22:00 News in English
22:30 Over My Dead Body

PRAYER TIMES

04:34 Fajr
05:37 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:39 Asr
16:18 Maghrib
19:21 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetish Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637285
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terramonte Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625453
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Assiout International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 623824, 650922
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Slight rise in temperatures will take place and winds will be northerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min./max. temp.

Amman 18 / 30
Aqaba 26 / 37
Deserts 20 / 34
Jordan Valley 25 / 37

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Azzam Agrabawi 642696
Dr. Muhammad Al Sawwa 732056
Dr. Mufied Tamouss 884480
Dr. Tawfiq Qab'In 623028
Firas pharmacy 651912
Al Asena pharmacy 637035
Nairookh pharmacy 626672
Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 844945
Stanesal pharmacy 637640

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 943462
Highway Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 625800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 910230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

AMMAN:

Dr. Tawfiq Al Bayyari 637111
Al Sharan pharmacy 773625
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halasa 984171
Khalifah pharmacy 984171

Electric Power

Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Ezeldi Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Akleh Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 664174
St. Joseph Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mustashfi Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 6612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 661646
Islamic, Al-Mubajjar 777012
Al-Bashir, J. Abdali 7731126
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital 09983323
Zarga National Hospital 09980560
The Sina Hospital 09968732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09990990

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) International department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 0653200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

New law on press freedom to be sent to Parliament

By Omar Al Omari
Petra

AMMAN — The new law on press and publications which the government is to submit to Parliament for approval is not a mere amendment to the old law but rather a new law that takes into account the democratic transformations in the Kingdom and the National Charter, according to Minister of Information and Culture Khaled Karaki.

The new draft law has been thoroughly studied by advisors working for the government who also enlisted the views of many experienced specialists serving in the fields of the press and publishing houses as well as writers, Dr. Karaki said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Sunday.

He said the new law guarantees freedom of printing, freedom of expression in any form including writings and drawings and freedom of the press to provide the public with news, commentary and material related to science and culture. The law guarantees public freedom and rights for all, the minister said.

He said that the new draft law ensures the right for access to information and news which would be presented to members of the public who will be allowed to publish their views in freedom.

The new law guarantees the right of newspaper editors and journalists to keep confidential and secret sources of information and news. It also grants political parties, cultural, social and professional institutions the right to free expression and to publish their activities and achievements.

Dr. Karaki said that the new law, however, reaffirms certain basic principles related to the ethics of the profession of the media, like being objective and accurate in reporting and refraining from publishing anything that might stir violence or deepen hatreds or create tendencies towards sectarianism and racism.

According to the minister, the new law provides terms and conditions for those wishing to issue any periodicals or publication. He said that the new law empowers the Council of Ministers to grant licences for new publications within 30 days after the date of application for such licences but the government also has the right to deny such licences provided it gives justifications for such refusal, which in turn could be contested at the Higher Court of Justice.

The new law on press and publication defined the government's share in the ownership of a newspaper, Dr. Karaki said. Such participation should not exceed 30 per cent of the total capital of the newspaper or press institution, explained the minister.

He added that the new law emphasises private freedoms and stresses that the press should by no means publish anything that may conflict with such freedoms, national responsibilities, human rights and the values upheld by the Arab and Islamic nations.

The minister said that the law organises the terms and conditions for any reply to articles printed in the press, conditions, and terms for publishing books inside or outside the country and conditions related to the practice of local newspapers and journalists receiving grants or gifts from any source in Jordan or abroad.

According to the law, a licence for issuing a publication can be granted to journalists, a firm or a political party. The minister said that the law does not restrict the number of publications or periodicals that can be published.

The Council of Ministers, which met Saturday evening under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Taher Masri, approved the new draft law on press and publications in Jordan.

Dr. Karaki said the draft law will now go before Parliament for debate and approval.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Justice Minister Tayseer Kanaan with the first batch of students from the Judicial Institute (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Prince Hassan cites role of judiciary in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday attended the graduation of the first batch of students from the Jordanian Judicial Institute.

Addressing the graduation ceremony, Prince Hassan voiced the King's utmost care for the independence of the Judicial system and its integrity, in accordance with Article 30 of the Jordanian Constitution, which placed the Judiciary branch above two Executive and Legislative branches.

The Crown Prince said that the independence of the Judiciary does not mean its isolation from Jordanian Society. He hoped that the Judiciary will look into all means for advancing the profession and to reach at objective and independent approach characterised by integrity and justice, he said.

Prince Hassan named three elements which he said were necessary for strengthening the Judiciary. These elements are: — obtaining a higher academic degree in an area of specialisation and benefiting from all modern legal theories that are capable of enriching the law profession in our country.

— documenting and keeping all decisions taken by the Jordanian Judiciary, particularly the decisions passed by the Higher Judicial bodies because analytical documentation of such decisions benefit the continuity of work, — and preparation of a perception of the Judiciary establishment.

Also addressing the graduation ceremony was Justice Minister Tayseer Kanaan, who voiced his gratitude for the King for the care His Majesty gives to the Judicial

system. "This care is a dear certificate which every member in the Judicial system boasts of. It also serves as an incentive for dedicated work and for the smooth administration of justice," Mr. Kanaan said.

The judicial institute has been established upon the directives of His Majesty King Hussein to prepare qualified cadres in the judicial field.

At the end of the ceremony, Prince Hassan presented the certificates to the graduates and received the institute's trophy.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, a number of cabinet ministers, members of the Jordan Bar Association's board, judges and members of the Board of the Judicial Institute.

U.S. funding of Jordanian projects to be resumed

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The green light has been given for the resumption of spending on programmes in Jordan financed by the United States after the Bush administration provided certification to Congress to unfreeze aid suspended since April, U.S. officials said Sunday.

"There was an amount of \$57 million which was in the pipeline that was frozen in April and now this has been unfrozen," said Tom Oliver, director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Amman.

The clearance came after President George Bush certified to Congress on July 23 Jordan's "helpfulness" in the American-led Middle East peace process, Mr. Oliver said. The aid was suspended by Congress in an expression of Washington's displeasure with Jordan's refusal to join the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition in the Gulf crisis.

American officials said early this month that President Bush had sent the necessary legislation to Congress to unfreeze financial assistance to Jordan. But, they added, no new funds have been committed and military aid programmes are still under review.

In addition to the \$57 million, which Mr. Oliver said was committed under agreements signed in previous years, the presidential certification has cleared the way for formal procedures to discuss further aid to Jordan.

Mr. Oliver said the USAID office in Amman had already resumed work on projects which were frozen as a result of the aid suspension. These include industrial and agricultural development programmes and feasibility studies carried out under allocations made in years prior to 1990.

The administration had earmarked \$31 million in assistance to Jordan for fiscal year 1991 (October 1990 to September 1991), but the allocation was removed under the congressional order, leaving the amount of possible allocation to Jordan subject to further consultations with Congress.

"The high end of consultations with the Congress is \$31 million but we don't know how much will be the actual amount," Mr. Oliver said. The allocation has to be made before Sept. 30, the end of fiscal year 1991.

The United States is also providing about 240,000 tonnes of feed grain for poultry and livestock worth \$27 million to Jordan under an agreement signed in July. This assistance

is not covered by the restraint imposed by Congress since it is channelled through the Department of Agriculture and not USAID.

Total American assistance to Jordan for fiscal 1990 was close to \$270 million, including grains and military aid. Part of the assistance was allocated against "debts unpaid." A similar level of assistance was expected for 1991 but the Gulf crisis, which led to the strain in American-Jordanian relations, preempted it. In fact, the original earmark for aid to the Kingdom for 1991 was \$85 million, including military aid. This was reduced to \$55 million late last year by Congress.

Fresh requests for aid to Jordan will be presented to Congress in October for fiscal year 1992 and Mr. Oliver expressed confidence that the congressional decision will be favourable.

Mr. Oliver said he would only discuss economic assistance and referred all questions related to military aid to the American embassy.

Under the 1991 earmark, military assistance was expected to be \$20 million. An American embassy spokesman said he expected that amount to be restored.

The Congress is scheduled to end its summer recess later this month.

Farmers in Jordan Valley to be compensated for loss of crops

DEIR ALLA (I.T.) — Farmers whose crops were severely damaged in the last agricultural season due to the use of polluted water from the King Talal Dam will receive compensation from the government at the rate of JD 8 per dunum, Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kassar announced Sunday.

Should these farmers decide not to grow any vegetables and fruit on the affected lands in the coming agricultural season in October, they would be eligible to receive JD 12 per dunum, the minister said at a meeting with farmers during an inspection visit to the Jordan Valley region.

Farmers were reported to have sustained damages estimated totalling JD 60 million allegedly because they had used polluted water from the King Talal Dam.

As of Saturday, three centres will open at Deir Alla, Tallat Al Ramel and south Shuneh to receive applications for compensation, the minister said.

Last winter, the government set up a special committee to investigate the causes of the dam-

age but no report was published about its findings and the compensation to farmers was seen by many observers as an implied admission that the water of the King Talal Dam reaching the farmlands was polluted, causing the damage to the crops.

The government is giving due concern to the question of irrigation in the Jordan Valley region and is currently studying all aspects related to water in the Kingdom to find proper solutions for each region, the minister said.

The question of water pollution at the King Talal Dam resulting from the flow of water treated at Khirbet Al Samra Waste Water Treatment Plant will also be dealt with and the government plans to improve the quality of water for irrigation in accordance with internationally recognised standards, the minister added.

Mr. Kassar said that the government will never allow contaminated water to reach the farmlands because of its dangerous effects on humans. He said that orders went out for the start of repair on the King Abdullah

Canal, which carries water from the Yarmouk River to the Jordan Valley farmlands. The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) will immediately begin maintenance work to save up to an estimated 20 per cent of the irrigation water which is being lost due to leakages in the canal.

According to the minister, the cost of a cubic metre of water reaches 58 fils but is sold to the farmers at the rate of only six fils, with government covering the rest of the cost.

The distribution of irrigation water will be fair and strictly monitored by JVA regardless of the type of crops, the minister said.

He also announced that an agreement was reached with the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) to examine the soil in the central Jordan Valley region under the supervision of a foreign firm to ensure that it is not contaminated and can be used for farming. Lands irrigated by water from the King Talal Dam will be tested periodically under this agreement, Mr. Kassar said.

Malaysian experts stress nutritional value of palm oil products in seminar

By Lee Wahbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A three-member Malaysian delegation currently on a visit to Jordan held a seminar Saturday on the origin of palm oil, its uses and its nutritional value in an effort to promote awareness of the product.

The visit to Jordan is part of a tour of palm oil importing countries by experts from the Malaysian Palm Oil Institute. The visits are conducted on an annual basis to update importers' knowledge and pass technical and scientific information on palm oil.

Malaysia is the biggest producer and exporter of palm oil. Oil palm accounts for nearly a third of the country's cultivated area. The country supplies 57.2 per cent of the world's palm oil production.

Jordan, which has a 6.92 kilogramme per capita consumption of palm oil, is one of the Middle East countries that imports Malaysian oil. The region imports 1.68 million tonnes of palm oil, accounting for 25 per cent of the total Malaysian production.

According to experts at the seminar, the palm tree bears about 10 to 12 fruit bunches a year and is never without fruit from the time it starts producing, when the tree is three years old, to the time it ceases to be economically productive, about 22 years later.

Oil is extracted from the pulp of the fruit, the mesocarp, and from the kernel. Both parts are made up of 50 per cent oil.

The extraction process is different for each and they are kept separate for the properties not to get mixed up. According to the experts, extensive research was done in various countries in order to counter criticism regarding high cholesterol levels in palm oil. Researchers found that palm oil, contrary to previous thinking, helps increase "good" HDL (high-density lipoprotein) and reduce "bad" LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol.

Palm oil is the only vegetable oil with a balanced composition of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, both in processed and unprocessed forms. When freshly extracted from the mesocarp, palm oil is the richest known source of beta-carotene, the pro-vitamin A pigment, and has a high content of vitamin E. These two elements help inhibit cancer (they were identified as possible anti-cancer agents) and reduce the blood clotting tendency thus reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

The oil, experts say, is highly versatile, having a large array of uses. When refined into a light-coloured product, it is used in deep frying and cooking, in margarine, ghee, bakery fats, confectionery and non-dairy whiteners. The by-products are the non-food applications such as soaps, cosmetic products, candles, paper and even palm diesel.

As a source of energy, palm oil has been compared to mother's milk, providing nine kilocalories per gramme.

Swiss government considering forgiving part of loan to Jordan

AMMAN (I.T.) — The Swiss government has decided to consider part of its 60-million-Swiss franc loan to Jordan as a grant in a bid to help the Kingdom overcome part of its external debt burden, according to a statement by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Safwan Touqan.

Switzerland is now considering changing a sum of 20 million Swiss francs (about JD 9 million), its share in the loan, to a grant to Jordan but the rest of that loan would have to be settled with the creditors — a consortium of Swiss banks, Dr. Touqan said.

The Council of Ministers here had approved an amendment to this agreement which was originally signed last June. The council also authorised the minister of

planning to formally sign the amendment to the agreement on behalf of the Jordanian government, Dr. Touqan said.

Switzerland is one of a number of European countries which offered Jordan loans and grants in the wake of the Gulf crisis to ease the pressure on the Kingdom's national economy, which was severely affected by the crisis.

In another development, Dr. Touqan announced that he had reached agreement with the Soviet government to hold a joint Jordanian-Soviet meeting in Amman in the coming month to implement a joint cultural programme for the coming two years.

Dr. Touqan made the statement following a meeting at his

office Sunday with Soviet Ambassador to Jordan Yuri Griadunov.

The two officials agreed that Jordan and the Soviet Union should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of their joint executive programme on cultural cooperation by the end of this year, Dr. Touqan said. He added that agreement was reached that a joint meeting should be held in Amman before the end of the coming month to review the implementation of the cultural programme for the coming two years.

Jordan attaches great importance to the implementation of the programme, which is designed to launch cooperation in science, higher education, education, information, culture, tourism, archaeology, youth, health and vocational training, he said.

Production Supervisor Wanted JORDAN RIVER ENTERPRISES

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Applicant must be:

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WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of traditional embroideries and hand-made items at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings depicting the Jordanian environment by artist Shaker Al Jorani at the Royal Cultural Centre.

SYMPOSIUM

- ★ Symposium entitled "Gorbachevism — Revolution or Counter-Revolution?" at Abdul Hameed Shoman's Cultural and Scientific Centre — 6:30 p.m.

LAMBADA

FESTIVAL

DEAD SEA SPA HOTEL
PRESENTS DIRECTLY FROM
BRAZIL LAMBADA FESTIVAL
ON THURSDAY 22nd AUGUST 1991
ENJOY BRAZILIAN FOOD &
DANCE SHOW

DINNER & SHOW 18,000 JD / PER
1/2 DBL. BED. & BREAKFAST 16,500 JD / PER
TRANSPORTATION FROM PHILADELPHIA HOTEL AT 7:00 p.m. TO DEAD SEA
SPA HOTEL AND BACK AFTER THE SHOW 3,000 JD / PER
ALL TAXES AND SERVICES INCLUDED.
TICKETS ARE SOLD AT PHILADELPHIA HOTEL AND DEAD SEA SPA HOTEL

فندق البحر الميت العلاجي
DEAD SEA SPA HOTEL
FOR RESERVATION AND INFORMATION CONTACT
601554 - 601544

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975

الصحف الأردنية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من قبل المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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On circles and bottlenecks

GRANTED THAT the exodus of Iraqis and Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates into Jordan over the past several months has contributed to the unusually heavy traffic jams being witnessed in Amman and some other Jordanian cities these days. But the truth is that the real sources of our traffic problems lie more with the way our people drive and the design and planning of the roads their cars have to negotiate in order to get there. Take for example the decision to block two small but vital intersections on the main Jabbal Amman thoroughfare, specifically between the Fifth and Sixth circles and the Sixth and Seventh circles. Ostensibly the verdict to close those connecting points with the other side of the Jabbal Amman area was to speed up the flow of traffic and avoid its obstruction by periodic turns to the left or right of that congested part of the capital. Yet what ensued from that unfortunate step is exactly the opposite because by confining the "turning points" to two main intersections several bottlenecks were unnecessarily created. As all vehicles are forced to continue their drives till the "bitter end of the road," namely Fifth and Sixth circle traffic lights, in order to turn into Um Uthaina and Swaileh, the inevitable mayhem erupts at exactly those two points. The same applies to Gardens Street and Jordan University Road, among many others, where drivers are obliged to go many extra and unnecessary kilometres in order to be able to turn to where they want to go in the first place. Instead of these troublesome traffic jams caused by the artificially created bottlenecks, it would have been safer and less costly in terms of time and gasoline costs for the concerned authorities to have maintained a sufficient number of outlets and intersections on the principal streets. The only price that drivers would have had to pay for keeping the original solution is the control of their speed, which is a maximum of 60 km/hr inside towns anyway. In actual terms such control in the speed of automobiles on the affected streets would not be so much as to justify traffic bottlenecks in so many arteries of Amman.

Of course there are many other traffic problems that the urban areas of our country continue to suffer from. On so many occasions the matter of maintaining well-defined lanes was raised again and again without any solution in sight. It so happens that well-marked lanes contribute to driving discipline that Jordanians so desperately need to learn once and for all. The process to draw up distinct recognisable traffic lanes is not such an expensive venture that our traffic authorities or the Amman municipality cannot afford it. The economic costs of keeping our streets in such disorderly shape, not to mention its human costs, outweigh any economic factors pertaining to having street lanes and Stop sign markings. The trouble with traffic intersections as with traffic lanes and Stop signs which still no one pays any attention to lies in fact that no-one in the concerned authorities is paying attention to what the people of Jordan have been constantly warning against. If the national dialogue on such pressing issues continues to be a dialogue between the deaf, then there is no point in pursuing this matter any longer. Hopefully this time around, when the streets of Amman are so heavily congested, someone out there will listen and take note of what the people of Jordan need and desire.

When a former mayor of Amman was asked not too long ago why he would not entertain the idea of building an artificial lake in Amman, his answer was simple. "I do not want to be responsible for anybody drowning in it," he said. Well, do our traffic officials want the responsibility for the loss of hundreds of lives in traffic accidents every year simply because they cannot do a good job in their field of work?

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IN HIS interview with Visnews television network a few days ago His Majesty King Hussein called for a united Arab stand and concerted efforts on the part of Arab states in direct confrontation with Israel before the peace conference can convene in October. Al Ra'i daily said Sunday. It said that Jordan is keen on uniting the Arab parties' stand with regard to this important conference not because it cannot stand by itself, but rather because it is keen on achieving a united Arab stand that can be of real weight at the coming conference which is supposed to discuss issues of common concern to all Arabs, the paper noted. Any further delay in uniting Arab countries' stand is bound to weaken the Arab position, said the paper. The paper noted that Israeli and American teams of officials and experts have been working hand in hand for a long time in order to coordinate their views at the coming conference at a time when the Arabs are in disarray and failing to achieve the minimum level of coordination. The paper said that Israel is skillful in falsifying facts and distorting situations, and unless the Arabs are up to that challenge, they would soon be deceived.

AL Dastour daily tackled the plight of the Jordanian-Palestinian community in Kuwait and said that Western countries are tightlipped and turning a blind eye to the atrocities committed against this community by the Kuwaiti authorities. The Western countries' silence about such atrocities is tantamount to condoning such actions and such atrocities and is considered as an outright support for the Kuwaiti crimes against Palestinian and Jordanian civilians, the paper noted. We are blaming the Western countries because they had been bragging about human rights, had launched a war against Iraq under that pretext and have been claiming to uphold international law and implement international legitimacy, the paper added. The leaders of the Kuwaiti regime seem to have closed their ears to calls from Arab brothers urging them to stop the inhuman treatment of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates simply because they are backed by the military forces of the U.S.-led alliance, the paper continued. We are indeed saddened to see Arab countries failing to do anything to halt the atrocities but we are also appalled by the attitude of the Western countries and their failure to uphold human rights and international principles in the case of the oppressed expatriates driven out from Kuwait.

Weekly Political Pulse

Iraqis only can choose and shape their destiny

By Waleed Sadi

THE kind of punitive measures being applied against Iraq must have as their aim either the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime or the destruction and mutilation of the Iraqi nation or both. How else can one explain the string of United Nations Security Council resolutions being adopted on Baghdad which in their cumulative effect appear to aim for the dismantling of the Iraqi nation and rendering it impotent and subservient for as long as one can see?

Against this seemingly international plot against part of the Arab World, the Arabs appear ominously silent. Recently, however, Cairo began to change its stance on the basically Western determination to liquidate Iraq by noticing Washington, and other capitals supportive of the U.S. master plan, that the Egyptian people will not support any more military strikes against Iraq, under any pretext, since such military offensives would be viewed by the Egyptian people as a bellicose effort to destroy an Arab country.

If this new Egyptian logic is pursued a little further and extended to its logical conclusion one would likewise conclude that the economic blockade on Iraq is a great threat against the well being of an important part of the Arab World and therefore must be foiled and aborted.

Unfortunately, Cairo's voice against the continuation of measures against Iraq and its people is not being effectively echoed by other Arab capitals, with the exception of Amman, as far as one can detect. Had the silent Arab capitals joined the meek chorus against the disfiguration of Iraq and the dispersion of its people,

there might have been some hope that Iraq and its people could still be saved from the terrible fate they have faced already.

As for the rest of the comity of nations, there is no hope whatsoever that they may succeed in arresting the campaign against the Iraqi leadership and its people as long as the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council view their collective interests as better served by aiding and abetting such a campaign.

Against this backdrop, the Iraqi leadership has two options: either to stay firm against the relentless efforts to bring it down or to give way to other forces that have a chance to soften the blows against their country.

Rightly or wrongly, whenever a country is defeated as badly as Iraq was, the leadership immediately changes in order to better absorb the shock and effects of such a defeat.

If one may draw a parallel between the defeat of Germany and Japan in the World War II and the defeat of Iraq, then the natural thing to anticipate in the Iraqi situation is a change of leadership. Obviously such a decision in Iraq cannot be taken lightly or with impunity. Only the Iraqi people have the right to exercise such a prerogative to determine its future by a national plebiscite democratically conducted. After all, the people of Iraq are and should be the final arbiters of such a national course in the wake of the defeat of their country in the Gulf war.

Surely the Iraqi people would weigh their decision with utmost national responsibility and take into consideration the events and circumstances that have led to the defeat of their armed forces.

In the Arab World, there are some precedents for such a course of action to take in the aftermath of a defeat of the magnitude Iraq has sustained.

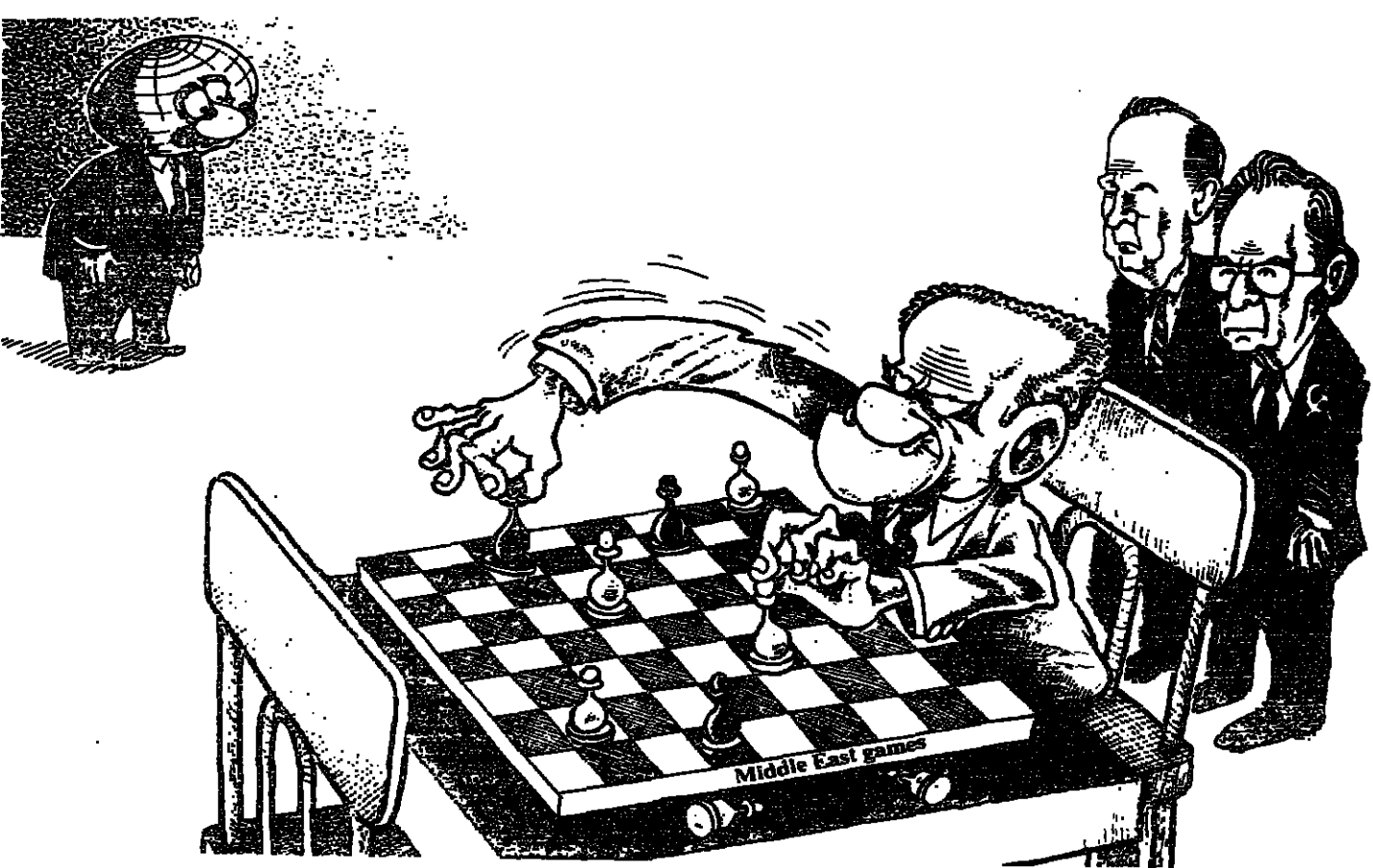
The late Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser, took that course when his country was defeated in the 1967 war with Israel, albeit the decision to refer the leadership issue to the Egyptian people did not take the formal route of a referendum.

Accordingly, the sooner the Iraqi people are given such a right and the sooner the Iraqi leadership takes this road for national salvation the better it is for all sides.

As the Iraqi government is now keener than ever to introduce parliamentary democracy, such political developments on the domestic scene would provide the kind of opportunity for Iraq and its people to determine its future. As things stand now, there is a grave risk that Iraq would continue to be bled to death and its people dispersed across the Middle East and beyond.

If this is in essence the purpose of the Washington-London axis, then Iraq and its people must endeavour to preempt such a plan by taking the kind of remedial actions that could succeed in pulling the rug from under the feet of their enemies.

If the Iraqis choose to keep their leaders and renew their confidence in them, then the enemies of Iraq will have to take note of this solemn decision and give up their vicious attack on it. But as long as the Iraqi people are denied the opportunity to voice their support for their leadership then the enemies of Iraq would continue to entertain illusions about their ability to destroy Iraq.



M. Kahil

Beware Bush's 'new look'

By Moshe Zak

PRESIDENT George Bush did not ask Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to make a gesture toward the Islamic Jihad, as did British Premier John Major. Had he done so, he would have received a polite, reasoned reply, like that sent to Mr. Major, saying that Israel couldn't play games with gestures while ignoring its seven POWs and MIAs in Lebanon.

After slipping in his first reaction to the Islamic Jihad demands, Mr. Bush reverted to the traditional U.S. policy of not surrendering to blackmail by a terrorist organisation. And it makes no difference whether the blackmail is about a money ransom (releasing the billions of dollars of Iranian assets frozen in the U.S.) or political ransom (pressure on Israel to free terrorists).

However, the American media, which do not question the administration's wisdom in refusing to unlock the Iranian assets to spring the Western hostages in Lebanon, this week worked overtime calling for an Israeli gesture to bring about the release of American and British hostages kidnapped and held by the pro-Iranian militias in Lebanon.

The crushing reply to these calls was given this week by Dr. Henry Kissinger who explained that American pressure on Israel to release terrorists would only invite new kidnappings of American citizens.

This claim by Mr. Kissinger is consistent with his stand even in the days when he was President Richard Nixon's adviser. Among papers found in the White House is a memorandum the then-national security adviser sent on Dec. 4, 1970, to the president. It said:

"Dear Mr. President: In view of the news stories about possible plots of kidnapping (Kissinger himself), I would like to state my position in the extraordinary event that this should occur. If such an attempt should succeed, I would like to ask you to meet no demands of the kidnappers, however trivial. I would assume that any demand that is met would establish a precedent which is against the national interest. If you should receive any communication from me to the contrary, you should assume that it was made under duress. Re-

spectfully, Henry A. Kissinger."

The line laid down by the Nixon administration has directed U.S. governments since then: unlike France, which has agreed to financial and political deals with terror groups to free its citizens in captivity, the U.S. has stood firm on the principle of not surrendering to terrorist blackmail.

This consistent stand, however, showed a crack at the beginning of the week when Mr. Bush made some remarks on the subject of the hostages in Lebanon. His words could be interpreted by the Islamic Jihad to mean it had won the president's understanding of their demands for an Israeli gesture as a condition for letting Western hostages in Beirut go free. In the course of the week, the administration was forced to work hard to clarify that the U.S. would not press Israel and would not try to squeeze from it a gesture in favour of the Islamic Jihad.

Some 10 months ago, Iran asked the Swiss government to mediate between it and Israel concerning the freeing of Shiite prisoners in South Lebanon; Switzerland proposed that Israel take the first step as a gesture for freeing prisoners, to advance the release of Western hostages and Israeli POWs, and MIAs in Lebanon. Israel responded to the Swiss recommendation and freed 40 Shiite prisoners.

But that gesture remained unanswered. The U.S. was privy to this negotiation, so Mr. Bush made a grave factual error in crediting the American agreement with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad concerning a regional peace conference for the Islamic Jihad proposal to free American hostages in return for pressure on Israel (the organisation works under Iranian guidance in Syrian-controlled territory).

From Israel's viewpoint, the Islamic Jihad's message to the U.N. secretary general poses a worse condition than the approach through Switzerland: for at that time, October 1990, the negotiation was conducted from the outset over the inclusion of Israeli prisoners and MIAs in the deal. Only in April this year did the Iranian foreign minister change the terms by announcing at a news conference in Tehran that his country would be ready

to cooperate in freeing hostages in Lebanon if the U.S. pressed Israel to release Sheikh Obeid and other Muslims held by it.

At his vacation home, Mr. Bush was not fully briefed with all the facts; had he been informed of the content of the Islamic Jihad note, he would have taken care not to voice that unfortunate remark about the deep concern by the captors of the hostages regarding the Palestinian problem. Had he read the document, he would have been careful not to praise what it said:

"If struggle, jihad, and resistance against the superpowers is terrorism, we and the oppressed peoples throughout the world are proud to be terrorists, combating injustice and striking terror into the hearts of the enemies of God and Mankind, as long as they interfere in the internal affairs of oppressed nations and peoples anywhere in the world."

And if Mr. Bush had gone on to read the next sentence, he would have seen:

"The U.N. should endeavour to put an end to the hegemony of the superpowers over its resolutions and activities, and one of its first tasks should be to abolish the iniquitous right of veto, which is rightly regarded as worse than the law of the jungle."

Assuredly, he would have refrained from congratulating the Iranian government for its part in freeing Western hostages, since it is clear to everyone that this statement was not written in Beirut, but dictated by the Iranian Foreign Ministry: it has launched a campaign to abolish the big powers' veto in the U.N. Security Council — something which is not the concern of the "Oppressed of the World" in Beirut.

It is doubtful that Mr. Bush would have recommended listening sympathetically to the words of the Beirut kidnappers to their captives had he first read this segment of their note to the U.N. secretary general:

"We appeal to you, in your capacity as secretary general of the U.N., and to the world as a whole, to adopt Islam as an ideology, a code of law, and a system to follow the teachings of the great Imam (Ayatollah) Khomeini, who expounded the principles and conventions on

which peoples, movements and regimes must base their endeavours to achieve progress, to solve the problems with which they are burdened, and to achieve happiness and well-being."

It may be assumed that he would even have been careful not to commend their remarks on the Palestinian issue: most of the hostages grabbed in Lebanon a priori firmly espoused a pro-Arab line; they did not need the lectures they got.

The hostage David Jacobson of the American University of Beirut justified his views, after being freed, by saying that what he had been videotaped as saying against President Ronald Reagan and Israel was said "under duress."

In contrast, the American missionary Benjamin Weir stayed faithful to the anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian line he preached during 32 years in Lebanon. On his return to Washington, he called on the U.S. administration to change its policy toward Israel, which he harshly attacked — though he knew he had been freed thanks to Israeli intervention in Tehran!

Then-President Reagan sent a note of thanks to Israel for that and his vice-president, Mr. Bush heard during his visit to Jerusalem of the Iranian instructions broadcast from Tehran to the terrorists in Lebanon.

On the surface, no excessive importance need be attributed to Mr. Bush's casual comment (while playing golf during his vacation): the more so after his subsequent public explanation that the U.S. would not negotiate a deal with terrorists and would not press Israel to make a unilateral gesture.

However, in practice, a remark like that reveals his latent thoughts on the Middle East: they could be symptomatic of the forging of the "New Look" in Washington — a look according to a central place to Syria, with a stronger emphasis on the Palestinian cause, and preserving distance in political coordination with Israel.

The development of such a "New Look," for which the regional conference will serve as the anvil, is bound to worry Israel — The Jerusalem Post.

Flicker of hope illuminates murky underworld of terror

By David Hirst

THE upsurge of optimism about the release of another Western hostage in Lebanon, and even the possibility that the Iranian-backed Shiite terrorist underground is now disposed to negotiate a deal for the release of all 12 of them, is far from the first of its kind. Perhaps it is more seriously grounded than usual. But it is almost more confusing, because it came so suddenly.

Furthermore, although there has long been a clear trend — local, regional and international — in favour of a happy ending to the hostage saga, an opposite push is also making itself felt at the moment, one that might actually lead to fears of a resurgence of hostage-taking.

It is murky and impenetrable, the underworld of hostage-taking, involving a weird mixture of the criminal and political, the personal, factional and strategic, religious zealotry and cruel cynicism. It features an array of actors — Iranian, Syrian, Israeli, West-ern, Lebanese Shiite — just about everyone, in fact, except the Lebanese state on whose territory it flourishes.

The positive indications may, as U.S. intelligence is suggesting, be based on something of an accident: a sharp deterioration in the health of Terry Anderson, the American journalist who, after his capture in March 1985, has endured his appalling physical and psychological ordeal the longest of all.

On the other hand, they could be the fruits of a series of larger developments. Chief of these is the emergence of President Hashemi Rafsanjani as the undisputed strongman of Iran, the growing ascendancy of his "pragmatic" wing over its "radical" rivals within the post-Khomeini revolutionary leadership, its determination to improve relations with the West, and its recognition that the hostages remain a basic obstacle.

Characteristically, it was the Tehran Times, mouthpiece of the pragmatists, which broke the news of a possible release.

"Another such constant is the determination of Syria's President Hafez Al Assad — whose wooing of the West has come to fruition with his historic concessions in the Arab-Israeli peace process — to shed a reputation for terrorism every bit as well-earned as Mr. Rafsanjani's once was, and to prove that he can bring peace to Lebanon where everyone else has failed.

Syria cannot claim as much influence as Iran over the fundamentalist Hizbollah movement and its hostage-taking sub-groups, but, if only through the sheer weight and scope of its physical presence, it has some influence over at least a segment of them. Often in the past it has used it, with the lucky captive's furtive handover to Syria intelligence in a West Beirut street, followed by a pre-arranged press conference in Damascus, to achieve maximum credit for itself.

The hostage-takers themselves must feel very tempted to strike as favourable a deal as they can, before they lose even more of their diminishing bargaining power with their former sponsors or accomplices.

Their demands, as they have emerged in recent months, have been reduced to the release of up to 500 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, including Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, the fundamentalist cleric whom the Israelis abducted from deep inside Lebanon. The deal interests

the Israelis if they can use it to get back seven of their soldiers — at least two of whom are known to be still alive — missing in Lebanon. It interests the Western powers because it holds out the prospect of winning freedom for their nationals without having to "bow to terrorist blackmail."

In forecasting the release of an American and a Briton by the weekend, the Tehran Times took good care to warn that things could yet go very wrong. Its caution is perhaps even more justified than usual. The Times must be well aware of challenges to Mr. Rafsanjani's ascendancy.

The radicals may be staging a desperate rearguard action against him. Some reports have it that they are exploiting — with arson and the fostering of disturbances — the popular discontent engendered by his free market economic policies.

The hostage-takers themselves must feel very tempted to strike as favourable a deal as they can, before they lose even more of their diminishing bargaining power with their former sponsors or accomplices.

The radicals are outraged at the historic concessions which the Arabs have made on behalf of Pax Americana in the Middle East: they are particularly angry that Syria, traditionally Iran's closest Arab ally, should be showing the way. That is an embarrassment to Mr. Rafsanjani too; he recently sent his foreign minister to seek "clear explanations" from Damascus.

Habitually, the Iranians — rather like the Israelis — are all too willing to exploit their influence in Lebanon for wider strategic purposes. At the moment, their Hizbollah proteges are playing the spoiler's role, refusing to dissolve their militia — as the Palestinians are doing — under the aegis of Pax Syria, and owing to pursue the armed struggle against Israel to the end.

For Mr. Rafsanjani, fundamentalist militancy in Lebanon, insofar as he is still encouraging it, might simply be an instrument for extracting greater recognition for Iran's place in a new, American-dominated, Middle Eastern order; for his radical rivals it could be the base of a deadly seriously campaign, against him as well as against "the Great Satan."

The last time, in June, that the Tehran Times forecast an imminent hostage release, the eminence grise of the radicals, the former interior minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, told a rival Tehran newspaper that this would be a "two-edged weapon." If it involved any deviation from "legitimate" Islamic demands, he warned darkly, it would "definitely lead to internal (Iranian?) and external explosions."

Who, one wonders, is the Organisation for the Defence of Prisoners' Rights, which threw a grenade last night near U.N. offices in West Beirut, urging the U.N. Secretary-General, "the godfather of this deal, not to get involved in suspicious acts that serve the interests of American intelligence agencies and the Israeli Mossad?"

Almost all is conjecture in this unpredictable field, but it could well be that, with the Iranian pragmatists pushing so hard, the chances of a happy ending are better than ever. — The Guardian.

Jordan commuted sentences

(Continued from page 1)

sentences to judges to assess the legality of their detention and treatment.

According to Mr. Cordone, all these safeguards are included in the United Nations Convention against Torture. Jordan has decided to ratify this treaty as well as the Optional Protocol to the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights.

"Amnesty's definition of an ideal country in terms of respect of human rights is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards. We call on all governments to ratify these and to adapt local and national laws in line with the international treaties," Mr. Megally said.

Specifically, Amnesty works for the release of all people imprisoned because of political or religious views or ethnic or racial discrimination, of who have not used or advocated violence, one of those who are termed prisoners of conscience. "We ask for the repeal of any legislation that allows such individuals to be imprisoned," Mr. Megally explained.

Amnesty also works for fair, prompt trial for all political prisoners. "We are against torture and death penalty in all cases," he said.

"In that sense, any government that follows these principles are close to an ideal country that we seek," Mr. Megally said.

Asked how Amnesty assessed Jordan's records and performance when compared to other countries of the region, Mr. Megally said that the organization tries not to make such comparisons. "We try not to compare countries and not to

have a league table of countries in terms of human rights records," he said. Each country has its own social, economic and political context as violations and "each country differs greatly in terms of types and intensity," he said. However, "we welcome any improvements in human rights situations."

On a different level, Mr. Megally said that Amnesty is "very concerned about the situation of Palestinians, Jordanians and other nationals returning from Kuwait."

"We have called on Kuwaiti authorities not to expel anyone (from Kuwait)," he added. Amnesty has also called on authorities not to execute any of the prisoners recently convicted or sentenced to death. "Amnesty is pleased that those sentences are now commuted, but it has expressed concern about trials that have already taken place, particularly over allegations of torture, pre-trial detention and lack of appeal following detention."

The two delegates will report back to the secretary general (of Amnesty International, in London and seek to continue the "constructive dialogue" and the open access to Jordan that we have today," Mr. Megally said. "Where it is appropriate, we will make further recommendations to the government in the spirit of the improvements that are taking place presently," Mr. Megally said.

The Amnesty experts voiced satisfaction over the importance Jordan has given to the respect of human rights in the National Charter. "We hope that positive steps are taken by Jordan that will encourage improvement of human rights throughout the region," Mr. Megally said.

Syria, Egypt accept Arab talks

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war — including Jerusalem — the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and international legitimacy."

Mr. Najjab also said that the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, which is based in the occupied Gaza Strip, has rejected participating in a meeting of the Palestine National Council (PNC), expected to be convened in Algiers on Sept. 15.

"We contacted the Hamas leadership and invited them to a preparatory meeting for the PNC session, but they refused," Mr. Najjab said.

His Majesty King Hussein said recently that he planned to visit Damascus soon for talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. The 450-member PNC will elect a new seventh council, which includes the presidency, the Executive Committee and representatives from PLO factions.

Hamas had demanded a quota for its representation in the PNC, but Mr. Najjab would not comment whether the PLO rejected Hamas' proposals.

"There will be independent representatives from those in the diaspora and new faces in the Palestinian organisation (in the upcoming elections)," Mr. Najjab said.

He added that the PNC meeting "would either support or reject the plan towards the peace conference."

He said that the majority of the PLO and PNC members supported a general peace process "based on international legitimacy."

Foreign Minister David Levy.

"Levy expressed the Israeli government's position that the issue could not be resolved except as part of an overall answer to the Arab-Israeli conflict," said one source. "However, he promised to study the matter further and get back to Musa," the source added.

In the meantime, the Algerian and Libyan governments are offering employment to Palestinian expatriates, official sources said. "But the offers are limited to skilled workers such as teachers, engineers etc.," said one official.

Advertisements have appeared in the local press inviting applications through the PLO for employment in Algeria and Libya.

U.S. President George Bush Sunday credited Iran with playing a more constructive role in the United Nations in negotiating terms for the release of remaining Western hostages in Lebanon.

Although Mr. Bush stopped short of saying that Iran had taken the lead in efforts to bridge the differences between the hostage-takers and Israel, he told reporters: "I think there's a feeling that they would like to get this matter behind them."

The president also said he was unconcerned about the current lull in the peace process and said he did not believe there had been a loss of momentum although "we ought not to get the hopes of people up."

Government takes steps to help returnees

AMMAN (J.T.) — The newly-established Returnees Welfare Committee met Sunday under the chairmanship of Saleh Hamad, who is also the secretary general of the Interior Ministry, and discussed the information and statistics collected about Jordanian and Palestinian citizens who have returned to Jordan after losing their jobs in Kuwait and other Gulf states.

Mr. Hamad also had a meeting with a leading member of the Jordanian community in Kuwait, Abdullah Al Qaq, who expressed the appreciation and gratitude of Jordanians returning from Kuwait to His Majesty King Hussein.

Mr. Hamad was briefed by Dr. Qaq on the demands of returnees and the difficulties they are encountering. Later, he met with the director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) affairs in Jordan, Frank de Jonge, and discussed with him the agency's potential contributions to help the returnees.

The instructions gave customs officials the authority to grant exemptions in accordance with the provisions set out by the circular issued Sunday, without referring to the Customs Department. The new instructions allow for more flexibility in checking incoming luggage accompanying returnees.

Customs officials can only check a specific number of items against the Customs Clearance Declaration rather than checking all the items. The instructions also gave priority to furniture over other items.

The circular provided for exempting from customs duties all household utensils, electric equipment and carpets accompanying returnees, provided that such equipment are designed solely for use by the families concerned. The instructions also gave customs officials or their deputies the authority to determine the consumption rate. However if any dispute arises about this rate, it should be set

in favour of the returnee. Under the new instructions, the beneficiaries from the customs exemptions must present a written statement that neither they nor any of their family members were granted exemption for their furniture over the last two years. They will also have pay customs duties and taxes on such furniture if it has been established that such items were granted exemption during the previous two years.

In another development, the Ministry of Education said it had taken steps to absorb more than 50,000 students, and was planning to accommodate another 20,000, according to ministry Secretary-General Munther Al Masri.

In an interview with Jordan Television, Dr. Masri said the Ministry of Education had taken a number of measures aimed at enhancing its capacity to deal with the huge number of students who will enrol in its schools this year. The measures included, in-

ter alia, abandoning plans to leave rented schools, increasing the number of students in all sections from 35 and 40 to 50, class, restoring the two shifts school system and recruitment of about 500 teachers.

Dr. Masri pointed out that the costs involved would be around JD 8 to 10 million. He added that there were no problems in admitting students, even if they do not have documents.

"We will take the students' word concerning the classes they were in," the ministry's secretary general said.

However, the ministry's director general of education, Dr. Khaled Al Sheikh said in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that students would be given a period of six weeks to bring in their documents. "In case it is impossible for a student to bring these documents, he or she will have to sit for a test to assess his level, and the student will be accepted in the right class," Dr. Sheikh said.

American delegation calls for lifting of sanctions against Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of eight Americans concerned with humanitarian issues related to the Gulf war and the Arab-Israeli conflict left Amman for Cairo Sunday after brief visits to Syria, Iraq and Jordan.

Affiliated with the Human Rights Project, a non-governmental organisation based in Washington, the group included two physicians, business executives and writers. One of the physicians, James McDermott, is also a member of the U.S. Congress from Seattle, Washington. He is travelling in a private capacity.

Coordinator of the group is Dr. Landrum Bolling, former college president and long-time student of Middle East affairs and recently retired Rector of The Ecumenical Institute at Tantour, on the edge of Bethlehem.

"Our mission," Dr. Bolling said, "has been to inform ourselves about the human realities resulting from the tragic events of the Gulf conflict so that we may be better able to hold discussions with policy-makers and opinion-makers in the United States. Our country is engaged in a whole series of inter-related debates about the Gulf war and American policies in the Middle East. We want our participation in those discussions to be based on verifiable facts and direct first-hand observation."

Asked about their impressions of conditions in Iraq, Dr. Bolling replied: "We were in Iraq too short a time to have more than a limited set of superficial views. However, we visited several hospitals in Baghdad and in provincial towns, we talked at length with government officers and with representatives of several international NGOs actively engaged in humanitarian assistance projects."

We saw a number of shocking cases of severely mal-nourished small children, he continued. "We all agreed that the issues of adequate supplies of baby milk

Amman area health centres overburdened

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Health Ministry is intensifying efforts to provide medical services to the public through its health centres in Amman and other areas in light of the growing demand on such services by the large community of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates, according to Zeid Al Kayed, director of the ministry's Health Department in the Amman region.

Health centres and hospitals are witnessing a huge influx of patients, many of them expatriates returning from Kuwait and the ministry is doing all it can to cope with the situation, Dr. Kayed said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The health department in the capital has made arrangements to deal with the extra workload and the health centres in the Amman Governorate have been supplied with additional quantities of medicine and medical equipment to deal with the situation, Dr. Kayed said.

Expatriates, like the rest of the public, are being offered vaccination, laboratory tests and general health services, Dr. Kayed said. According to the Ministry of

Health, comprehensive health centres in Jordan provide primary health care services, care for mothers and children and dentistry and X-ray services.

Government sources estimate the number of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates in Jordan at 350,000 plus nearly 100,000 Iraqis who have converged on Amman after the Gulf crisis and in the ongoing Kuwaiti move to expel expatriates.

Last month, Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kawayir said that drinking water shortages in certain areas of the Kingdom were caused by the return to Jordan of large number of expatriates. He told Petra that the Water Authority was pumping drinking water to the Amman region at the rate of 600 cubic metres per hour.

Columnists in the local press have been voicing public complaints about persistent chronic water shortages in many areas. Also there is an acute shortage of housing, causing rents soar.

The government last month announced that it has decided to begin spending from a JD 120 million supplementary emergency budget for 1991 to deal with the expected consequences of the Gulf crisis on Jordanian housing, health, education and social services.

Jordan seeks to help Gazans

(Continued from page 1)

invasion of Kuwait in August last year.

Post-war Kuwait is terminating the employment contracts of thousands of Jordanians and Palestinians, forcing them to leave the emirate, where most of them have lived for most of their life. The Egyptian policy has deprived the Gazans of any destination whatsoever since their laissez-passer is not accepted by any other country and their original Israeli permits to enter the Gaza Strip have either expired or been cancelled by the occupation authorities.

Jordan has expressed willing-

ness to allow entry to the Gazans for transit to the Gaza Strip through the Kingdom if the Israeli occupation authorities permit them.

His Majesty King Hussein referred to the issue in a recent interview. "If we can secure somehow a transit opportunity for them to get back home through Jordan...we will...see what we can do," he said.

According to the sources, the problems facing Gazans were raised during discussions held in Cairo earlier this month between Egyptian leaders, including President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa, and Israeli

Iran tightens pressure on Israel

(Continued from page 1)

before releasing any of the Muslim prisoners whose freedom is demanded by the hostage holders.

"On the issue of the release of the hostages, the Westerners are, as on all other matters, making their interests and demands the fundamental issue," Mr. Khomeini said on Tehran Radio.

He said the West must pressure Israel to free Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid if it wants its hostages in Lebanon released soon.

Sheikh Obeid, 33, a prominent Shiite Muslim cleric, was kidnapped by airborne Israeli agents from his home in South Lebanon

in July 1989 to be used as a bargaining chip for securing the release of seven Israeli servicemen missing in Lebanon.

He was a top official in South Lebanon for the Shiite Hizbollah, which is believed to be an umbrella group for the groups holding most of the 11 Westerners missing in Lebanon. The hostage-holders are demanding Sheikh Obeid's release from a prison in Israel.

"If usurper Israel does not release Sheikh Obeid and other detained Muslims, the problem of hostage-taking will undoubtedly not be resolved in the near future," Mr. Khomeini said.

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Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (August 12 - August 16, 1991)

NOTWITHSTANDING the continued cautiousness ahead of the much debated Bundesbank council meeting that was held Thursday, a change of sentiment towards the dollar/mark evolved Tuesday as market participants realised that expectations of a German interest rate hike were already factored in. But the dollar's sharp rally came Friday ending the week with an average two per cent gain in the dollar against European currencies, implying a loss for those who went against the trend last week.

The dollar edged marginally lower Monday in a discountless market, after failure to break resistance at 1.7350 marks triggered selling, while speculation continued to support the mark. The dollar started the week with what turned out to be its lowest closing levels of the week against European currencies at 1.7240 marks and 1.6975 dollars to the sterling pound.

A new scenario was starting to evolve Tuesday as market participants realised that a one per cent rise in German discount rate and an 0.5 per cent to one per cent rise in the Lombard rate were already factored in current exchange prices. Expectations thus began to build up for a possible rise in dollar rates after the Bundesbank meeting Thursday. The U.S. currency in fact started its gradual rise, encouraged directly by a stronger than expected 0.5 per cent rise in July's retail sales, breaking resistance at 1.7350 marks but failing against 1.7350 marks.

Several factors helped to relatively strengthen the dollar Wednesday within a tight range ahead of the Bundesbank council key meeting the following day. These involved breaching resistance at 1.7350 marks in Europe, a positive but expected Consumer Price Index and short-dollar covering on higher expectations of a dollar rise. The strong mark sentiment started to subside as analysts ruled out the possibility of an unanticipated hike in German interest rates in view of the political domestic and EMS pressures, in addition to a statement by the German economics minister condemning any interest rate rise, but profit-taking at 1.74 marks con-

tinued the U.S. currency. The much awaited Bundesbank council meeting Thursday ended with a one per cent rise in the discount rate but with a mere 0.25 per cent rise in the Lombard rate against expectations of at least 0.5 per cent. Yet the dollar's rise was limited. Observers maintained that the U.S. currency had already been over-bought thus leaving less room for manoeuvre (i.e. for a much higher rise). Rumours about a potential Bundesbank intervention around 1.75 marks further contained the dollar, especially in the Far East and Europe.

The dollar rallied Friday ending the week at its highest closing levels in New York at 1.7450 marks, 137.31 yen and 1.6582 dollars to the sterling pound. The unanticipated sharp rise was triggered by the release of a number of favourable U.S. economic data ranging from June's lowest, but expected trade deficit since eight years, standing at \$4.02 billion, to a rise of 0.5 per cent in July's industrial production. Capacity utilisation in July also rose to 79.7 per cent against expectations of 79.4 per cent. Some observers however were still pessimistic about the dollar's prospects in the medium term, attributing its jump to technical factors in a short-driven market and convinced that the positive data only sparked the rise.

Breaching resistance at 1.74 marks in New York Thursday, they added, had been a key technical signal as it enhanced its rise to new targets. They further maintained that the market needed consistent positive U.S. economic data showing recovery signs in the U.S. economy, as the improvement in the trade deficit was mainly attributed to a three per cent drop in imports, a sign of a still sluggish consumer demand. On the other hand the dollar-mark interest rate differential still favoured the German currency.

As for this week, resistance is expected to be pegged at 1.770 marks and 138.10 yen with support at just below 1.7500 marks and 136.50 yen. A major happening is the Federal Open Market Committee meeting Tuesday which will decide for or against a discount rate cut.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	9/8/1991 Close	16/8/1991 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.6952	1.6582	-2.09%
Deutsche Mark	1.7290	1.7045	-1.42%
Swiss Franc	1.4445	1.4445	-1.95%
French Franc	5.6805	5.9900	-1.38%
Japanese Yen	136.57	137.31	-0.54%

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Currency	9/8/1991 1-Month (%)	9/8/1991 3-Month (%)	16/8/1991 1-Month (%)	16/8/1991 3-Month (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.56	6.00	5.52	6.00
Sterling Pound	10.61	10.66	11.00	10.66
Deutsche Mark	9.06	9.26	9.00	9.37
Swiss Franc	7.62	7.75	5.12	7.75
French Franc	9.37	9.75	9.35	9.36
Japanese Yen	7.30	6.90	7.34	6.75

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.691	.693
Sterling Pound	1.1442	1.1499
Deutsche Mark	.3911	.3931
Swiss Franc	.4468	.4490
French Franc	.1150	.1156
Japanese Yen	.5026	.5051
Dutch Guilder	.3471	.3488
Swedish Krona	.1080	.1085
Italian Lira	.0522	.0525
Belgian Franc	.01900	.01910

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Bankamerica seen on its way to becoming top U.S. banking group

LOS ANGELES, California (R) — Bankamerica Corp., which has made a rapid comeback from billion-dollar losses to become the dominant west coast bank, is now primed to overtake Citicorp as the top U.S. banking group. In its latest move, the San Francisco bank last Monday announced a merger deal worth more than \$4 billion with Los Angeles-based Security Pacific Corp., which will put the merged company only one rung behind Citicorp in terms of assets.

The deal is in sharp contrast to the mid-1980s, when a steep decline in asset values, and problem loans to Third World countries, left the bank with billions of dollars of losses.

"It's been an amazing turnaround," said Merrill Lynch analyst Livia Asher, referring to a stream of profits since the bank's dark period of asset sales and work force reductions.

Some analysts have speculated that the financial rigours Bankamerica went through to recover from its mid-1980s slide may have primed it for the rapid strides it is now making.

Many contend that while New York-based Citicorp's \$217 billion in assets still eclipse the \$190 billion in combined Bankamerica Security Pacific assets, other key financial measures would put Bankamerica on top.

"(The new) Bankamerica will be number one in terms of capital, equity and market capital. In some ways those numbers are more important than asset size," said Raphael Soifer, an analyst with Brown Brothers Harriman.

Citicorp Chairman John Reed has said problem loans and the need for higher reserves against potential losses on them, will constrain his company's operations and earnings for some time.

Bankamerica, on the other hand, is flush with capital. Even after tackling Security Pacific's problem loan portfolio, analysts say the new bank should be able to make large strides.

Making the merger work will be a formidable task, with success hinging as much on the California economy as on the team of executives putting the package together.

But while analysts have concerns about the California economy, they have confidence in the executives.

"These are people who have shown they know how to cut costs," said Brown Brothers' Soifer.

Achieving economies of scale will be key to transforming Bankamerica into an earnings powerhouse in the next few years.

Richard Rosenberg, the bank's chairman and chief executive, is emphatic the firm is committed to this goal. "We will be sensitive to human issues but the message is we are committed to the tough decisions to make this work," he said.

Upon taking over the chair

from A.W. Clausen last year, Mr. Rosenberg focused on making Bankamerica the top west coast bank.

Earlier this year, he went after Bank of New England but lost to Fleet Norstar Financial Corp Inc and the leveraged buyout team of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts.

Mr. Rosenberg spoke Monday about the global Bankamerica that will come from the merger with Security Pacific, which also has a strong presence in Asia and a modest profile in Europe.

"We intend to build on the strengths of both institutions to create a highly profitable new banking enterprise that will become pre-eminent in the U.S. and even better-positioned on a global basis," he said.

"This (merger) is the platform from which they can go national," Keefe Bruyette and Woods analyst Donald Crowley said of the combination with Security Pacific.

CAIRO (R) — Egypt will revive its flagging cotton industry by tripling exports this year and ending the state monopoly, the head of the state firm has said.

Ahmed Shouman, president of the state General Organisation for Cotton, told Reuters Egypt would allocate a million qantars (155,000 bales) for export to recapture markets in Europe and Japan, regardless of harvest levels this year.

He also said he expected the state monopoly on cotton to end by 1994. Prices paid to farmers would be adjusted to market levels and quotas for land under cotton cultivation would end.

A cotton exchange would be reestablished in Alexandria.

"Cotton is the most profitable crop for the Egyptian farmer if he is left free from government interference," Mr. Shouman told Reuters by telephone from his office in Alexandria.

"If he is free to sell to whom he wants at the price he wants, we're confident that production will increase without any action by the government," he added.

Egypt's cotton exports have tumbled off dramatically in recent years. In 1990/91, they were down to just 45,000 bales from 685,000 bales in 1981-82.

Forced to sell their produce to the state company at uncompetitive prices, farmers have increasingly found other crops like cereals and vegetables more profitable, and the area of land under cotton cultivation has shrunk.

Egypt's high-quality long-staple brands of cotton have also been squeezed by synthetic fibres on the world market and have lost their premia.

Ministry of agriculture officials have predicted a crop of about

880,000 bales this year. Local demand from the spinning, yarn and textiles industries was about 800,000 bales last year.

"We have lost a lot of foreign markets through high prices and lack of supply," Mr. Shouman said. "This is why we have allocated a fixed quantity this year for export."

Local yarn and textiles companies could import cotton to make up for any shortfall, Mr. Shouman said.

"In previous years, there were restrictions on imports but these are being lifted too," he said.

Cotton farming employs about 650,000 people in Egypt and supports a textiles industry which accounts for over a quarter of total manufacturing output.

Mr. Shouman said although the state had allocated 650,000 feddans (360,000 hectares) last year, farmers only grew cotton on about 315,000 hectares, about 12.5 per cent of total arable land.

Export sales last year were almost double the actual quantity shipped, Mr. Shouman said, but contracts with eastern European countries and the Soviet Union, were scotched because they lacked the funds to pay.

The former communist bloc of eastern Europe accounted for about half of Egyptian cotton exports until 1989.

Mr. Shouman said cotton would be priced on the export markets with an "appropriate premium" over other brands.

The new state holding company for cotton — one of a string of such firms appointed to overhaul Egypt's public sector in line with the government's economic reform programme — would appoint its management by the end of the year, Mr. Shouman said.

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S. Korea faces record \$8b trade deficit

SEOUL (R) — South Korea faces a record \$8 billion trade deficit this year with soaring imports of machinery, oil and construction materials outweighing stagnant exports, trade officials have predicted.

The latest revised forecast of what has become a politically troublesome issue for President Roh Tae-Woo would top the previous record shortfall of \$4.8 billion last year.

The country's Economic Planning Board initially forecast a \$2.5 billion trade account deficit for the whole of 1991, but the estimates have been steadily revised throughout the year. The previous forecast was \$6 billion.

"The revised, worsened forecast is mainly attributable to expected increases in imports of machinery products, crude oil and construction materials in the rest of this year," a trade ministry official said by telephone.

Ministry officials expect that imports will stabilise later in the year while exports in steel, electronic products and electronics will strengthen.

Under the revised forecast imports on a cost plus insurance and freight (CIF) basis are expected to increase to \$81.5 billion from the original projection of \$79.5 billion, the official said.

Free-on-board (FOB) exports this year will likely remain at the projected \$73.5 billion.

South Korea's exports totalled more than \$85 billion on a customs-cleared basis last year while imports stood at \$93 billion.

The country's trade shortfall has already hit \$8.1 billion in the first seven months of this year, with FOB exports standing at \$39.6 billion and CIF imports at \$47.7 billion. The deficit was \$2.68 billion in the same period last year.

At a meeting with reporters earlier this month, Assistant Trade Minister Yu Duck-Hwan said the bulk of the machinery imports were being made to modernise and automate factories to restore South Korea's export competitiveness.

The country's current construction boom has prompted sharply increased demand for building materials. South Korea has become a net importer instead of a net exporter of these items.

Mr. Yu also noted that imports have steadily increased as South Korea, under heavy pressure from its major trading partners, opened its once tightly closed domestic markets to foreign goods. He said the government was committed to continued trade liberalisation.

"Some scholars say the trade deficit is the price we pay for democratisation," Mr. Yu said.

But some South Koreans worry

that the price may be too high. Worries about the trade deficit, and its effects on South Korea's newfound but somewhat fragile prosperity have found their way into the country's free-wheeling newspapers and even man-in-the-street discussions.

Many have blamed Mr. Roh and his government, which faces general and presidential elections next year, for the lacklustre performance.

And, as befits South Korea's essentially confucian society, calls for restraint in consumption, tighter discipline, particularly by unionised workers, and hard work are increasing.

"But the most fundamental cause of Korea's waning export performance is a lack of philosophy on the part of our leaders," veteran journalist Kim Young-Won said in a column, published in The Korea Herald, echoing the thoughts of many South Koreans.

"Conspicuous at the highest level of government is a chronic lack of a sense of perspective and peripheral vision," he said.

German privatisation agency sells more than 3,000 eastern firms

BONN (R) — German's Treuhand privatisation agency said it had sold about a quarter of the state-owned Eastern German enterprises it inherited during the unification process last year.

Agency President Birgit Breuel said the Treuhand had sold more than 3,000 of the firms it is charged with rescuing, selling or closing down.

This was between 20 and 30 per cent of the total load, she said, although exact calculation was difficult because many of the original 8,000 firms in the Treuhand's charge have been split into several smaller units.

Breuel told a news conference the earnings from privatisation up to the end of July totalled 12.5 billion marks (\$7.3 billion).

"What we are selling best at the moment are construction companies, which is a sign that recovery is taking place in that sector," Breuel said.

Seeing signs of a general economic turnaround in the former communist East, she said Treuhand-administered companies had begun hiring this year for the first time.

About 20,000 workers had been hired by firms not yet privatised and the agency expected the total to reach 80,000 by the end of this year.

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Yugoslav army enters troubled town; jets attack Croat positions

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Federal forces pounded Croatian positions from the ground and air Saturday in their heaviest involvement in Serb-Croat fighting since a ceasefire was declared 10 days earlier.

The combat in and around the town of Okucani shattered the ceasefire, prompting the federal presidency to meet in urgent session.

The Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug, reported an unknown number of people were killed in fighting between Croatian security forces and ethnic Serbian militias at Okucani and that another 25 people were injured or missing.

Virtually all civilians have left the town, Tanjug said, located about 110 kilometres southeast of Zagreb, capital of the independence-minded Republic of Croatia. The town is controlled by ethnic Serbs, whom the Croats accuse of opposing their independence bid. Croats accuse federal troops of siding with the Serbs.

The army sent 23 armoured vehicles and 11 trucks into Okucani Saturday afternoon to separate the warring sides, Tanjug reported, but fighting was reportedly continuing.

In Stara Gradiska, Croatian forces blew up a bridge over the Sava River 11 kilometres south of Okucani to halt an army column

trying to approach the town, Zagreb television reported. The river forms Croatia's boundary with the Bosnian Republic.

Earlier the military opened fire with artillery on a roadblock consisting of trucks parked on the Croatian side of the bridge, setting them ablaze.

Also in Stara Gradiska, air force fighter-bombers attacked a building used as a barracks for Croatia's paramilitary Peoples' Guard after one of its reconnaissance planes was fired upon from its roof, according to an air force statement carried by Tanjug.

The presidency demanded an immediate end to the fighting.

"The ceasefire must be strictly respected, guarantees (regarding the separation of forces) given by all sides should be fulfilled," said a statement from the presidency carried by Tanjug.

A Yugoslav ceasefire monitoring team left Belgrade Saturday for eastern Croatia. Other groups were to leave Sunday, Tanjug quoted Dragan Mulin, deputy head of the presidency's information service, as saying.

The latest fighting comes only three days before a meeting of the country's feuding leaders, where an attempt will be made to agree on Yugoslavia's future structure.

More than 200 people have died in the clashes that broke out

after Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia on June 25. Ethnic Serbs, who account for almost 600,000 of Croatia's 4.75 million people, want to remain part of Yugoslavia.

The federal armed forces, whose officer corps is predominantly ethnic Serb, have said they are only trying to keep the two sides apart and prevent further clashes.

Meanwhile the last time Bosnia exploded, all of Europe shook. Seventy-seven years ago this month, armies mustered by Europe's great powers began World War I — sparked by the assassination of the heir to Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand, by a Serb nationalist in Sarajevo.

Now, bitter ethnic warfare in neighbouring Croatia threatens to once again ignite the volatile mix of Muslims, Serbs and Croats in the Yugoslav republic, formally known as Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"Everything that is happening in Yugoslavia is a pale picture of what would happen in Bosnia if there were clashes," said the republic's Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic. "We have to be much more careful."

Ethnically and geographically, the republic is at the centre of Yugoslavia's secessionist and political struggles.

To the north, the breakaway republics of Slovenia and Croatia have fought to fragile truces with federal forces. The southern Republic of Macedonia has scheduled an independence referendum for next month. Hardline Serbia and the bulk of the federal army lie directly east.

So far, the obvious effect of the fighting in the other republics is a lack of gasoline. But tension is not in short supply.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, 42 per cent of the population is Muslim, considered a nationality in Yugoslavia. About a third is Serb, and 17 per cent is Croat.

While the Croats are mostly in southwestern section of the republic, Serbs and Muslims are sprinkled together in 102 of the 109 communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, said Information Minister Velibor Ostojic.

The three groups have not co-existed easily.

Orthodox Christian Serbs living there were subordinated to Muslims for centuries.

In the 1940s, Croatia's Nazi puppet government slaughtered thousands of Serbs and others on Bosnian territory. Muslims and Serbs battled one another in World War II, and some Muslims now worry Serbia and Croatia might settle differences by carving up Bosnia-Herzegovina.

A relatively small group of young Bosnians are drawing informal groups from Serbia and Croatia into a small peace movement.

Mr. Izetbegovic suspects that an invitation by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to form a new Yugoslavia out of the three republics not pushing for independence — Serbia, its ally Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina — is an effort to create a Serbia-dominated nation.

"The people of Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot accept a partial Yugoslavia," said Mr. Izetbegovic, who described Mr. Milosevic's proposal as "the beginning of a big Serbia or a small Yugoslavia."

Mr. Izetbegovic said if Bosnia-Herzegovina is left in a smaller, Serbia-dominated Yugoslavia, he would seek independence — a move that could open up the republic to a federal crackdown.

The new state would have a population of some 13.5 million, about 65 per cent Serb and more than 2 million Muslims.

"Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot accept any kind of Yugoslavia unless we are in a state with the majority of Serbs," said the information minister, Mr. Ostojic, a Serb.

Mr. Milosevic has tried to lure support of Muslims by saying they would have No. 2 status in the smaller Yugoslavia, said Stjepan Kijacic, leader of the Croatian Democratic Union in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"When he surrounds them... there will be no talk of rights," he said.

Croats have long accused Mr. Milosevic of inciting unrest among Serbs in Croatia with the goal of redrawing Yugoslavia's internal borders and creating a "greater Serbia."

After Bosnia-Herzegovina threw out Communist rulers in elections last year, Mr. Izetbegovic's Democratic Action Party, the Croatian Democratic Union and the Serbian Democratic Party formed a coalition.

Despite competing interests and underlying distrust, the shaky government has held together.



Bodies of divers recovered from South China Sea

HONG KONG (AP) — Rescuers have recovered the bodies of two divers trapped in a decompression chamber when a typhoon sank an oil barge in the South China Sea, claiming at least 15 lives, officials reported Sunday.

Two planes and 10 police patrol boats continued to search coastal waters Sunday for seven other missing crewmen of the 1,500-tonne derrick barge 29. The vessel sank 105 kilometres east of Hong Kong Thursday when it was battered by typhoon Fred's 120 kilometres per hour winds.

The missing include two other divers in the decompression chamber, British nationals Steve Hardy and Brian Sheppard.

"It is unrealistic to expect any survivors to be found at this stage but no one shall be happier than me to be proved wrong," said Trevor C. Berry, spokesman for the Hong Kong Marine Department.

He said the search was being concentrated closer to Hong Kong because bodies of the missing may have been washed ashore by strong winds and rough seas.

The barge, carrying 195 people, was involved in an oil exploration project with China.

Mr. Berry said 173 people, including 11 Americans, were rescued. Fifteen others, including barge superintendent Billy Young of Weatherford, Texas, were confirmed dead.

The body of diver John Lyons, a New Zealander, was recovered by a rescue ship Thursday night, a day before the air supply in the decompression chamber ran out.

The body of the other diver, Terry Denison of England, was recovered Saturday when it was spotted 32 kilometres east of Hong Kong.

The decompression chamber door may have burst open under the increasing pressure when the chamber plunged to the ocean floor, said George Stapleton, a representative of barge owner McDermott (South East Asia) Pte Ltd. of Singapore.

2 strong quakes hit U.S.

EUREKA, California (AP) — Two strong earthquakes rocked the Pacific northwest Saturday, the larger registering 6.9 on the Richter Scale. Rock slides closed roads, power lines were downed and a house was knocked off its foundation.

There were no reports of injuries in either quake, although authorities received numerous calls from shaken residents. They were felt as far away as Sacramento, 440 kilometres to the southeast, and Eugene, Oregon, 290 kilometres northeast.

The first quake measured 5.8 on the Richter Scale and struck at 12:29 p.m. (1929 GMT), according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Golden, Colorado. It was centred in a wilderness area near Shelter Cove, about 60 kilometres south of Eureka.

The second quake hit at 3:17 p.m. (2217 GMT) and was centred in the Pacific about 105 kilometres west of the coastal town of Crescent City, the USGS said.

Most damage appeared to have come from the first quake.

Small rock slides blocked a rural paved road near Garberville, about 24 kilometres east of Shelter Cove, said Humboldt County Sheriff's Deputy Floyd Stokes.

Frederick the Great reburied in Potsdam

POTSDAM, Germany (AP) — The bones of Prussia's King Frederick the Great were returned to eastern Germany Saturday and reburied at his magnificent summer palace, bringing out a clutch of flag-waving rightists and fanning new debate over militarism in united Germany.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, ignoring criticism that his attendance could revive fears of German militarism, joined the once-royal Hohenzollern family to reintroduce the remains of Frederick the Great and his father, Frederick Wilhelm I.

Mr. Kohl and others defended the occasion as a sign of Germany's unification — Potsdam was part of former Communist East Germany — and a chance to learn from the country's turbulent history on the 205th anniversary of Frederick the Great's death.

The crowd of visitors was so large — police estimated 80,000 — that state officials extended by 90 minutes the deadline for viewing Frederick's coffin before the area was closed off to prepare for the reburial.

Some spectators used the royal spectacle as an opportunity to turn the clock back.

They saluted with sabers and waved flags of the old German Empire as the two coffins passed on horse-drawn carriages draped in the black-and-white Prussian colours.

"We don't have to hold ourselves back," said Kahlebohn Hauke, 23, a student who came from Bremerhaven in northern Germany because he said he would never have another chance to see a German king buried.

Standing with a dozen people flourishing the red-white-and-black flags of the 1871-1918 Prussian-led German Empire, Mr. Hauke expressed bitterness that Germans were thought cowards because the country didn't join the Gmf war.

Frederick the Great's coffin, with an honour guard of eight military officers, was put under a black canopy in a colonnaded courtyard of the rococo summer palace he built and called Sanssouci. The name means "without cares" in French, the language Frederick preferred to German.

Police said about 60,000 people passed through the courtyard for a last look at the coffin.

Among them were protesters whom authorities decided to welcome as part of the historical debate over the reburial. They had to leave placards outside, but one person was permitted to head a skull mask to pass the coffin.

Frederick, who ruled from 1740 to 1786, was reburied at midnight (2200 GMT) on the terrace of Sanssouci next to his beloved greyhounds, with four attendants carrying lanterns. He had said in his will he wanted to be buried at midnight by lantern-light, with no pomp or grand ceremony.

Frederick's father, who once almost had the crown prince executed for trying to run away, was laid to rest during the afternoon in a royal mausoleum nearby.

Hurricane heads for U.S. coast

MIAMI (AP) — Hurricane Bob, the first of the Atlantic season, moved steadily north Sunday and was expected to strengthen as its 80 mph (130 kph) winds swirled toward the North Carolina coast.

The hurricane was upgraded from a tropical storm Saturday, causing forecasters to post coastal alerts from North Carolina north to Delaware.

Hurricane Bob was expected to shower the outer banks of North Carolina with rain Sunday and the eye could move over shore late Sunday night or early Monday, said forecaster Max Mayfield.

"We do think the northern motion will continue today," Mr. Mayfield said early Sunday. "A cold front moving across the northeast United States could move Hurricane Bob off the shore, which would be very good news."

Mr. Mayfield noted the storm could move quickly up the coast once it's passed North Carolina and cautioned it could later affect the northeast. But he said the strength and direction was difficult to predict.

A hurricane warning was posted from Little River inlet on the South Carolina-North Carolina line northward to south of Virginia Beach, Virginia, including Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds. A hurricane watch, less serious than a warning, was in effect from Virginia Beach northward to Cape Henlopen, Delaware.

Australian police seek motive behind mall shooting

STRATHFIELD, Australia (AP) — Police began piecing together a psychological profile Sunday of a 33-year-old taxi driver who killed seven people 24 hours earlier, but said that his motive remained a mystery.

Armed with an assault rifle and a machete, the man stabbed a 15-year-old girl to death and then fatally shot six others at a shopping mall in this Sydney suburb, before shooting himself to death.

"It's hard to figure out," a police officer who was not identified told a news conference. "He had four cups of coffee, paid his bill, then started the killing."

Police continued to withhold the gunman's name, saying they



Bhutto attacked by rivals

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Political rivals threw bricks at former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and fired over a crowd of her supporters, party officials said Sunday. They said party workers shielded her from the bricks with their bodies and she was not injured.

For nearly half an hour Saturday night, gunmen fired over the heads of hundreds of Bhutto loyalists gathered outside the home of a deceased party worker in this port city wracked by ethnic and political violence.

Ms. Bhutto had gone to offer condolences to the family.

"The police did nothing. They didn't interfere or try to stop the shooting," said Farooq Leghari, a spokesman for Ms. Bhutto.

No one claimed responsibility for the shooting, and police refused any immediate comment.

Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) blamed the rival Mohajir Qami Movement (MQM), or People's Refugee Movement. The militant organisation represents immigrants who came from India after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

The MQM is demanding recognition as Pakistan's fifth ethnic group. The others are Sindhis, Pathans, Baluch and Punjabis. The MQM, which is confined to Sind province, is aligned with the governing Islamic conservatives.

"It was the MQM but don't quote me. Otherwise they will kill me," said one of Ms. Bhutto's party officials. He said armed attackers also assaulted several party workers.

Ms. Bhutto has repeatedly accused the chief minister of Sind province, Jam Sadiq Ali, of harassing her party. She says as many as 5,000 party workers have been jailed on trumped up charges.

The government has denied her accusations.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's new army chief, General Asif Nawaz, has pledged to support democracy and warned the armed forces to stay out of politics.

"I would like it clearly understood that the army must have nothing to do with politics," Gen. Nawaz said in orders issued to the army on Saturday, his first working day since taking over as chief of army staff Friday.

"Let the elected representatives do their job while we concentrate on acquiring ever greater professional excellence," said his order of the day read out at garrison parades.

Bush vetoes D.C. bill over abortion funds

KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine (AP) — President George Bush has vetoed a bill that would have allowed the nation's capital city to spend its own money on abortions, telling Congress: "As a nation, we must protect the unborn."

"From the outset of my administration, I have repeatedly stated my deep personal concern about the tragedy in America of abortion on demand," Mr. Bush said in his veto message to Congress. "As a nation, we must protect the unborn."

Washington D.C. Mayor Sharon Pratt-Dixon criticised Mr. Bush's move, saying, "where a woman chooses to live should not affect her reproductive choice."

Washington's congressional delegate, Eleanor Holmes Norton, conceded there were insufficient votes to override the veto.

The president told reporters that he doubts abortion will be a major issue in next year's presidential race and that Americans are becoming "turned off by the excesses" of some anti-abortion groups and by other disruptive demonstrators.

Mr. Bush indicated he did not approve to tactics used by militant anti-abortion protesters in Wichita, Kansas, but Mr. Bush has supported the Justice Department's recent decision to intervene in the case on the side of the anti-abortion group — Operation Rescue — fighting a federal judge's order to keep two abortion clinics open.

Operation Rescue announced Saturday that its leaders, Randall Terry and the Rev. Patrick J. Mahoney, were headed to Kennebunkport to seek a meeting with Mr. Bush to urge him to

Seoul accused of building army positions on border

TOKYO (AP) — North Korea accused South Korea Sunday of building military positions in the demilitarised zone between the rival states, and of seeking "only confrontation and war."

The Communist North regularly accuses the south of various provocations, but such allegations have increased recently.

In the past week, the two sides have been feuding over rival plans for rallies to promote Korean reunification. They called off various bilateral talks, while still planning to go ahead with their highest-level talks — meeting between their premiers scheduled Aug. 27-30.

The South and its allies, expressing fears that the North was close to developing nuclear weapons, also have been pressing the North to accept international inspection of its nuclear facilities.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency contended Sunday that with U.S. encouragement, the South Koreans "are getting frenzied in the moves for provocation of a new war, pushing ahead with the large-scale construction of various attack positions at more than 30 places in the demilitarised zone."

The report, monitored in Tokyo, said that Friday and Saturday, South Korea sent 500 to 1,000 workers into the DMZ's central sector to work on a large-scale fortification project.

"This clearly shows that the South Korean puppets seek only confrontation and war, remaining indifferent to the peaceful reunification of the country," it said.

The agency also accused South Korean troops of firing automatic rifles in the DMZ Friday, but did not say where the alleged firing was directed.

On Saturday, it added, South Korean troops moved an armoured car into the DMZ, "in readiness for an attack battle."

In the highest talks ever between the two Koreas, which have been divided since 1945, their premiers have met three times since last September, without substantial progress on easing tensions.

The talks scheduled next week would be the fourth round.

In preparatory talks last week, the two sides were unable to agree on an agenda, but decided to go ahead with the meeting between their premiers anyway, the South Korean government said.

North-South talks on forming a unified sports team for the 1992 Olympics had been scheduled to reopen Saturday, but the North cancelled them after the defection of one of its judo stars to the South.

No peace treaty was signed after the 1950-53 Korean war, and the two sides technically remain at war.

Cambodia is not worried about a 'red solution'

BANGKOK (AP) — Cambodia's government says it is committed to a United Nations peace plan for the country and denied that Vietnam and China have struck a separate peace pact in secret.

China and Vietnam said after high-level talks in Peking this month that they wanted to normalise relations after more than a decade of hostility.

Talk of a possible "red solution," where Vietnam and China support opposing sides, grew even though their joint statement supported a U.N. peace plan.

The Cambodian broadcast said concern over a separate peace process was "unwarranted." It said all of the warring Cambodian factions have accepted the U.N. plan as the basis for a settlement and would negotiate the rest of their differences.

The comments were broadcast Friday. A text was seen Sunday in Bangkok.

It said the Sino-Vietnamese rapprochement has "not affected the U.N. peace plan in the least."

It added that Vietnam's new premier, Vo Van Kiet, has denied that Hanoi and Peking have struck a secret deal.

The broadcast noted that China, one of five permanent U.N. Security Council members, helped draft the U.N. plan, and "there is no reason whatsoever for China to want to have its own document thrown away."

An Asian diplomat in Beijing said China sees the Cambodian issue as a way to improve its international standing. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the diplomat said China would not do anything to jeopardise its relations with the other permanent Security Council members.

The other committee members are Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union.

China is backing guerrillas fighting the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh. Vietnam invaded in late 1978 and ousted the pro-Peking Khmer Rouge. In response, China attacked Vietnam in early 1979, but Sino-Vietnamese relations have substantially improved more recently.

This month, Nguyen Co Thach — whom China reportedly considers hostile — was replaced as Vietnamese foreign minister.

The U.N. plan, which Phnom Penh has not fully accepted, calls for a truce, demobilisation of warring factions, and extensive U.N. involvement in Cambodia's administration during the period before elections.

The Cambodians are to resume peace talks on Aug. 26 in Thailand, which has been a key mediator in negotiations.

Thai Prime Minister Anand Panyarachon also dismissed the "red solution" theory in an interview published Sunday in the Thai newspaper The Nation.

"There are still some differences in interpretation and some issues left unresolved on certain aspects of the draft peace plan, but I think basically the draft peace plan is going to be 'the' one which would spell out the terms of the comprehensive political settlement," Mr. Anand said.

"I do not believe that there is going to be any deal behind your back or my back."

Column 8

Morgan horses dance to the beat

WEST SPRINGFIELD, U.S. (AP) — The 1,000-pound (440-kilo) beasts run, buck, snort, neigh and trot to the beat of music in one event that breaks all the rules in the otherwise serious, genteel world of horse shows.

"It's like turning on your Ferrari and letting it do whatever it wants to do without anyone at the pedal," horse owner Peter Webster said of "Liberty Class," the recent addition to Morgan horse competitions. The event combines aspects of a rodeo, beauty pageant, and a visit to a pasture of horses roaming free. The show ended Saturday. Handlers release an unfettered and unsaddled horse in the ring, where it is allowed to gallop, trot, prance, flare its tail and do just about anything else it pleases to 90 seconds of music. Two judges evaluate the mares, geldings and stallions in separate divisions, basing their decisions on what is called the horse's "charisma, style and attitude."

"A stage actor always has a good-size ego to perform. The same thing with a horse," said Richard Boule, a veteran of the Liberty Class. Arab horse enthusiasts had long practiced the free-style event. Morgan horses were first used in it when organisers of the Massachusetts Morgan Horse Show introduced it three years ago.

Smithsonian returns remains of 31 Sioux Indians

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sioux Indian representatives said Saturday that the Smithsonian Institution gave them the remains of 31 tribal members. But the museum still holds the remains of 15,000 other American Indians. The ceremony at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History Friday was one of the most significant uses to date of a 1989 law that called for the return of Indian remains to their tribes.

"Our relatives were brought here against their will," Everett Black Thunder said in an interview. "We want to take the spirits of these people home." Mr. Black Thunder is part of a delegation of 60 Sioux Indians who travelled to Washington to retrieve the remains from Smithsonian officials.

They erected a teepee and lodge in a park near College Park and are conducting a four-day ceremony of grief and mourning. The remains will be returned to 40 acres of tribal land on a Sioux reservation near Sisseton, South Dakota.

Patrick Swayze 'sexiest man alive'

NEW YORK (R) — People magazine has named Hollywood film actor Patrick Swayze of Dirty Dancing fame the sexiest man alive for 1991. Swayze, 39, who was "flattered and surprised" by the honour, according to a spokeswoman, was chosen by the weekly entertainment magazine's editors and writers. The five-page photo spread praises the Texas-born hunk's "sexy-but-sensitive, tough-but-tender" persona and features a good view of his broad shoulders, V-shaped back and well-developed arms. Swayze, whose blockbuster movie Ghost is a big hit in video stores, told people that his greatest fear is losing his wife, actress Liza Minnelli, 34, to whom he has been married for 16 years.

Executed Chinese prisoners' kidneys for sale

LONDON (R) — A doctor had said in a letter, carried by the British medical journal Lancet, that kidneys from executed Chinese prisoners were being sold to transplant patients from Hong Kong. Dr. Siu-Keung Lam of Queen Mary's hospital in Hong Kong said in the letter that kidneys were being sold for about \$10,000 (\$17,000). China has denied previous allegations that the bodies of executed prisoners are used for transplants. "Kidneys are usually obtained from prisoners who are executed for offences such as rape, burglary or political 'crimes' against the state," Mr. Lam said. "No consent for organ removal is given either by the prisoners or the family. Furthermore, the family rarely collects the body after execution for fear of harassment by government authorities." He said about 1,000 transplant in Hong Kong but only 50 such operations were completed each year. For patients referred to China, operations had taken place in teaching hospitals in the city of Guangzhou and patients were discharged a few weeks later if no complications occurred.

John... 1991